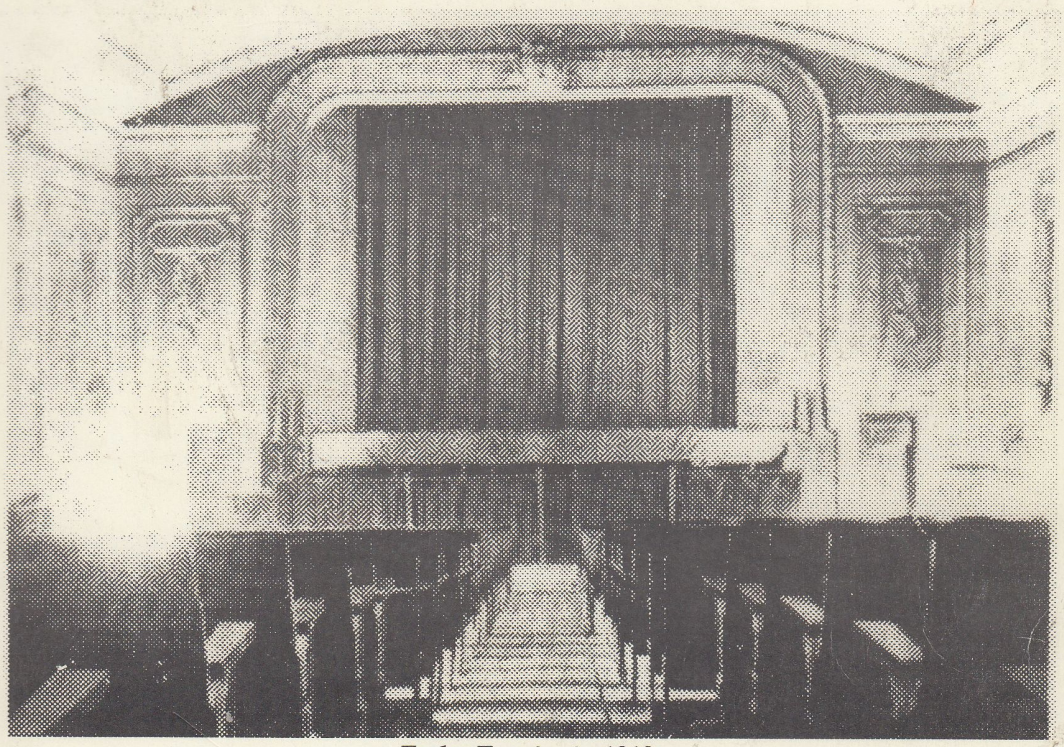
CHRONICLES OF PENDLE PICTURE PALACES



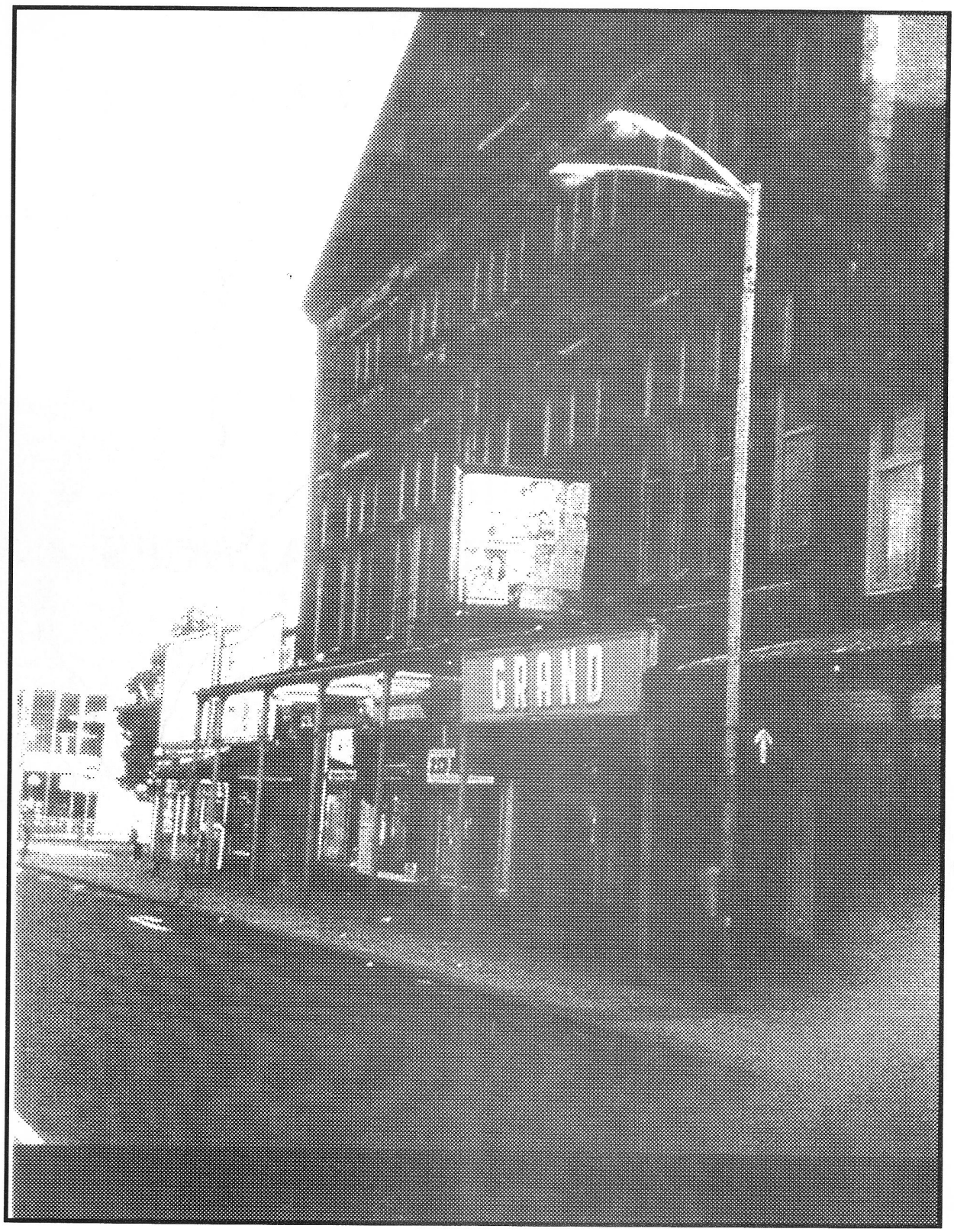
Earby Empire in 1912

by

PETER SAGAR

MERCIA CINEMA SOCIETY

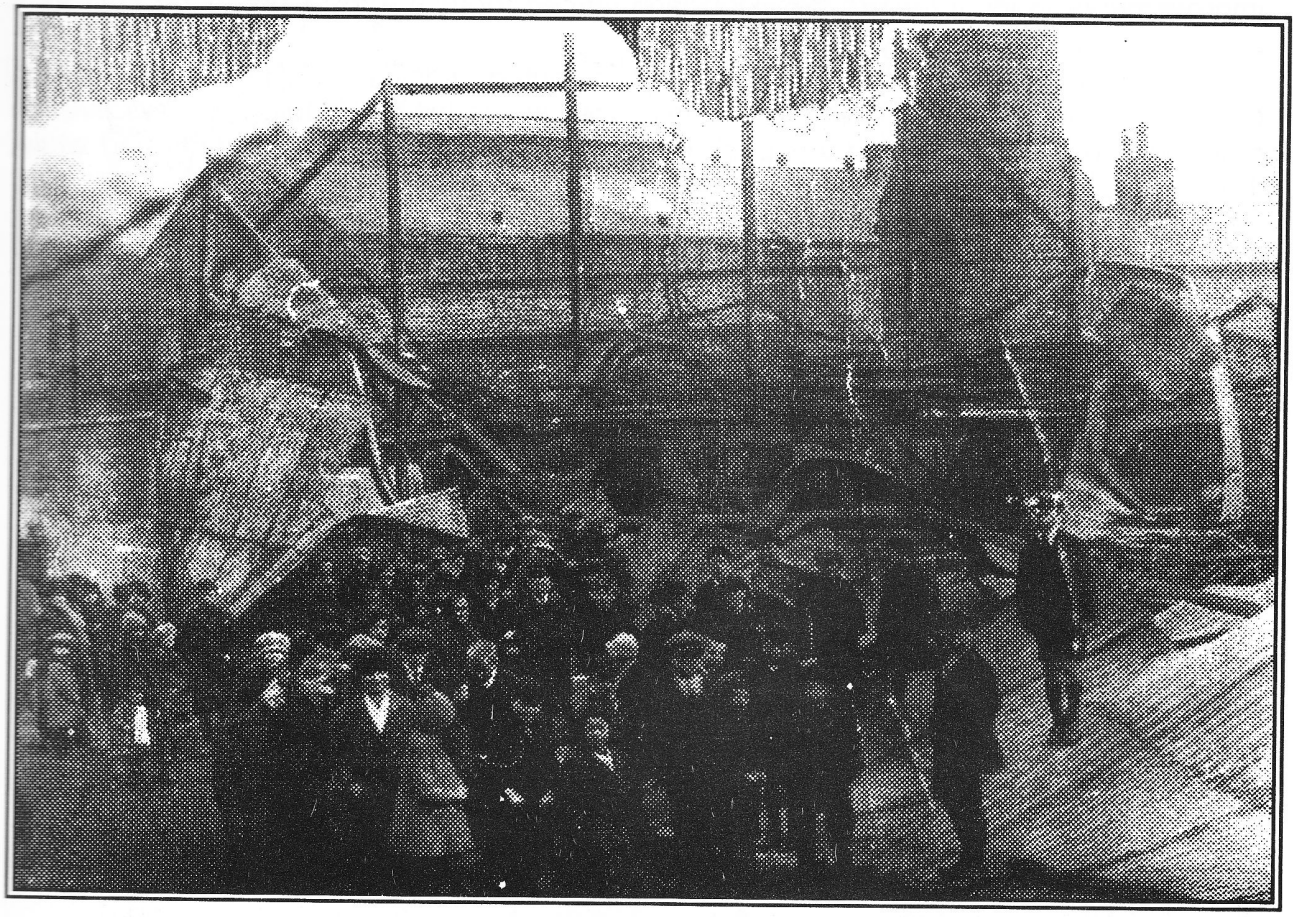
CHRONICLES OF PENDLE PICTURE PALACES



Frontispiece

The Grand Theatre, Market Street, Nelson

CHRONICLES OF PENDLE PICTURE PALACES



The end of the Theatre de Luxe - better known as the 'tin tabernacle', Railway Street Nelson post 1940.

by

PETER SAGAR

MERCIA CINEMA SOCIETY

PETER SAGAR was formerly a resident of the Nelson area and a councillor on Pendle District Council, and has long had an interest in local history.

He was the chairman of the Local History Society there, and rose to be chairman of the council's leisure committee. He was keenly interested in arts, and spoke for improvements in local theatre provision, and helped to secure the Coronation Hall as a community facility for Earby.

To the ***Mercia Bioscope*** he has contributed articles on Aldershot, Chorley, Cranleigh, Farnham and Weymouth cinemas, but this is his first book. He nows lives in retirement in Weymouth, and this book is the fruit of his long research continued whilst there.

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Chronicles of Pendle Picture Palaces

Nelson

Nelson did not exist at the beginning of the nineteenth century; it was just a collection of hamlets. By the end of the century it was the borough of Nelson with a population of more than 30,000, larger than its ancient neighbour, Colne. It had more Nonconformist chapels than public houses. In 1886 Joseph Brown built a baths in North Street. In the winter months the bath was boarded over and used for dancing and as a gymnasium.

The **Grand Theatre** in Nelson Street (now Market Street) was opened on 23 January 1888 with 'The Silver King'. 'Robinson Crusoe' was given in the second week. Its early days were not easy. In 1890 it was re-opened with 'Vice and Virtue', a story of Lancashire factory life by John Barker, the lessee of the theatre. In 1891 the Grand and the shops in the same complex were sold to Mr Astley, a local brewer, for £20,000. Mr Croft became the lessee. Melodramas with an occasional farce were presented. In 1899 renovations and extensive alterations were carried out. Its programme went 'up market'. In 1903 'Maritana', 'Carmen', 'Lily of Killarney' and 'Daughter of the Regiment' were given *inter alia*. The Grand continued to present melodramas with more frequently operas and Shakespeare's plays. It was to be Nelson's legitimate theatre for many years.

Plate 1 The Alhambra/Variety Hall/Baths building as it is now.

Films were shown at Nelson Fair in 1905. From 1906 animated pictures were a permanent feature at Brown's baths in the winter months, when it became the **Variety Hall**. Amongst the earliest 'Animated Electrograph Pictures' shown were 'The Village Witch', 'Scenes in a Tea Plantation' and 'The Bellringer's Daughter'. When the baths finally closed in 1908 the building took the name of the **Alhambra**. Joseph Brown was still the proprietor. The 'certified operator' of the Bioscope was C.S. Dickinson.

The Salem Independent Methodist School in Scotland Road was the venue for travelling exhibitors.

Nelson

The A1 Animated Talking and Singing Picture Co. hired the school from 14 February to 2 March 1907:

> *Enormous success. Crowded houses every night. Salem school, Nelson. A1 Talking and Singing Picture Co. We show what others cannot. The most beautiful picture produced: 'The Life of Christ' in all the most brilliant Eastern Colours, which has caused a sensation in Lancashire. Thousands unable to gain admission. It is recommended by all the leading clergy. It cost the makers the enormous sum of £5,000.*
>
> (*Nelson Leader,* 22 February 1907)

The company returned later in March for another week. Vita Animated Picture Co. was there from 6-13 April 1907. In September 1907 Henry Hoy hired the hall. Then in October and December, and in January and March 1908 A1 Animated Pictures hired the hall. Henry Hoy was back in April 1908. The London Animated Picture Co. took the hall from 16-28 April. Then came A1, followed by Henry Hoy. The Co-op. was there in November - December. The Co-op. returned in 1909 as did A1, but A1 cancelled its booking for September 1909.

Plate 2 - The building that housed the Royal Picture Hall as it was as the Church of Christ - though now a garage.

The **Royal Picture Hall**, Southfield Street, was Nelson's smallest cinema, and the farthest from the town centre. It was built as a church mission hall in the late nineteenth century. It became a brewery for herbal beers. The 1908 year book lists it as Clarkson and Lord, Herb Beer Makers. The present writer has not managed to discover its opening date and programme. The minutes of the Plans and Buildings Commttee of Nelson Borough Council for 25 March 1909 refer to 'Item 6, urinal at Picture Hall in Southfield Street for W Green'. It must have opened around this time. Tom and Herbert Green ran it.

At the beginning of 1909, Mrs. T. Greenwood-Croft was lessee and

manager at the **Grand Theatre** and George E Mudd was her business manager. From Monday 24 May 1909 it became the Grand Theatre of Varieties. The *Colne and Nelson Times* announced on 4 June 1909 that the Grand Theatre and Nelson Hippodrome would be closed on Saturday, 5 June for alterations and re-seating:

> *The theatre will re-open August 2nd as a Variety Theatre until further notice. Booking in conjunction with the Empire Music Hall, Burnley.*

Mrs.Greenwood-Croft was still lessee and manager and George E Mudd business manager. The opening programme provided J Gar Kiddie's company in 'The House of Tinn' (a sketch in one spasm); 'More Milk for the Baby' by the Hippograph Perfect Pictures; Andy Fagan, comedian and dancing expert; The Gilberts, *extraordinary wire act*; Bob Hamilton, *famous Scottish comedian*; Kathleen O'Hanlon Trio in their *refined musical, vocal and terpsichorian scene* 'Romps in a Drawing Room'; 'Miracle of the Necklace' and 'A Bad Pinch of Snuff' by Hippograph Perfect Pictures; Selby and Myers, comedians and dancers; and the first appearance in Nelson of 'Empress', *clever lady of mystery in her wonderful escapes.* This is the first mention of films at the Grand.

Plate 3 The Nelson Palace & Hippodrome as it is now

A new variety theatre opened on 13 December 1909, the **Palace**, with frontages to Leeds Road and Holme Street. It was erected in about five and a half months and cost £13,000. It seated 1,730. The architects were the Burnley and Liverpool practice of Matthew, Watson, Landless and Pearse. John Moorhouse & Son were the accountants for the Nelson Palace & Hippodrome Company. John Moorhouse junior was the secretary. The managing director was William Benson;

resident manager Willoughby Shaw. The grand opening was at 2.30pm in the presence of the mayor and corporation and ladies and gentlemen of the district:

> *Special engagement at enormous expense, Herbert Darnley with his colossal comedy company of twenty performers in 'The Brigands of Tarragona' including the Tarragona dancing girls; the company direct from* ***Manchester Hippodrome****; Sisters Belmont, dancing stars; the Great Vandinoff assisted by Mlle. Louie, the Lightning Artiste; Ethel Thomas, the celebrated Welsh soprano; Horace White, the inimitable ventriloquist at the piano; Brull and Hemsley in 'Fun in the Music Shop'; the Barnstormers Star Company direct from the Manchester Hippodrome; the Palascope in latest pictures; and the Cattaneos, world famous acrobatic comedians.*

The Palace advertised a children's grand picture matinée every Saturday at 2.30pm.

> ***Grand Theatre****, Nelson - Under New Management. Friday 17th December 1909. Lessee W.C. Horner. One night only. Mr. W.C. Horner has great pleasure in announcing that he has specially arranged to bring over to Nelson the entire company of Star Artistes now appearing this week at the Empire Theatre, Burnley, including the famous and peerless artiste Zona Vevey and Max Erard and full orchestra. Stalls 1/-. Circle 9d. Pit Stalls 6d. Pit 4d. Gallery 3d. Re-opens Friday 24th December for 7 nights, ' The Edged Tools'.*

Mr. Horner was the proprietor of the **Victoria Opera House** and the **Empire Theatre** in **Burnley**. The **Grand** then continued for many years with plays, opera, melodramas, and classical concerts. It was never called the Nelson Hippodrome again. The **Nelson Palace and Hippodrome** was always called the **Palace**, and was a variety theatre for many years, although pictures were shown from the beginning.

Nelson's first purpose-built cinema was opened by the mayor, Alderman Albert Smith, J P, on 29 August 1910 when Mr Breese presided. It was the **Theatre de Luxe**, in Railway Street: a corrugated iron building which earned it the nickname of the 'tin tabernacle'. Patrons sat on forms, and stoves provided the heating. Prices were 3d, 4d and 6d. Doors opened at 7.15pm and the programme began at 7.45pm. On Saturdays doors opened at 2pm to commence at 2.30pm when children were admitted for 1d or 2d. There were two houses on Saturday evenings: 6.15pm to commence at 6.50pm and 8.50pm to commence at 9pm. It was advertised as *one of the cosiest and most up to date Picturedromes in the country.*

The building, which seated 500, was crowded to its utmost capacity for the opening because of some misunderstanding about admission arrangements. Rupert Whittaker, the manager and lecturer, in introducing the mayor, welcomed patrons on behalf of the directors of the North East Lancashire Cinematograph Company. It was the company's intention, he said, to provide good entertainment and submit a programme that would meet with the approval of all sections of the public. He expressed regret that some inconvenience had been caused by the admission arrangements that evening but made it clear that there would be no repetition. The whole of the proceeds of the entertainment would be divided between two charitable concerns which had a warm corner in the heart of the mayor: the Nelson District Nursing Association and the St.John Ambulance Nelson Centre. It was through these organisations that the mayor interested himself in the matter and had shown himself agreeable to opening the hall. (The Labour mayor had been criticised for opening the Palace Theatre and the De Luxe on the grounds that he was *interesting himself in private financial objects.*) The opening programme was not reported. The programme for the week commencing 5 September 1910 was advertised as:

Gigantic Expensive Attraction. First Time in England. A great military drama. "Muggins, V.C." 2nd Series. A picture that will hold you spellbound. First time in Nelson. "Miss Simpkin's Boarders". A regular screamer. Also for the first time in Nelson, "Robin Hood". A subject which must be seen to be realised and many others.

Rupert Whittaker had been a lecturer for A1 Animated Pictures and had also worked at the **Alhambra** and the **Royal**. He was famous as a talker, or lecturer. In the days of silent cinema it was customary for the so-called lecturer to provide a commentary on the films. As manager of the **De Luxe** Whittaker wore a stetson hat and a carnation in his buttonhole and greeted his patrons by name at the door. Ben Holden was the pianist at the De Luxe for its first five years.

The **New Electric Palace and Concert Hall** in Russell Street opened on 17 December 1910. The first programme included 'The Broken Doll', 'Big Elk's Turndown', 'Two Little Clogs: or The Burglar's Surprise' and Leonard Dyson, the popular tenor. Prices 3d to 9d. It was described as the *finest Picture Palace in England* with *absolutely rock steady projection*. It was opened by Herbert Hartley who had started in the cinema business at the Royal. He was to play a very important part in Nelson cinema history. He had started work at the age of ten in a Nelson mill but was to become regarded as Nelson's 'entertainment king'. The Electric, as it was known, was on an upper floor. Underneath were a cycle shop, sweet shop and electrician's. It was advertised as having a beautiful interior: *All tip-up seats. Everything of the very best. Educational, dramatic and comic films. Illustrated songs.*

In July 1910 the **Palace** had a short picture season including a film showing Little Tich, a popular music hall star, before reverting to variety. J S Livesey was manager at the **Palace** in 1913.

Plate 4 Capitol/Tivoli/Cinema House/New Cinema

Nelson

The **New Cinema**, Seldon Street, opened on 23 August 1913. It was built by Sam Lyons. The *Nelson Leader* reported:

> *The opening of the New Cinema Picture House in Seldon Street, Leeds Road, on Saturday night was marked with great success. The hall was crowded for both performances on Saturday night, while everyone expressed their pleasure with the comfortable appointments of the hall and their appreciation of the pictures and the effective manner in which they were shown. A delightful comic (1,000 feet) was 'A Shower of Slippers'. The gossips catch the village belle making slippers for the bachelor parson - and how the tongues wag! Each gossip steals to the parsonage with a pair of slippers and the poor man is deluged. His sister precipitated a riot by giving them to a pedlar. A very tender and wholesome lesson was taught by the film, 'When Dreams Come True', in which the young owner of a Californian orange grove becomes disillusioned as to the power of wealth to produce happiness. 'Thou Shalt not Steal' (3,000 feet) is a problem of psychology with a happy ending, whilst 'Binks the Strike Breaker' recounts the amusing experiences of a man who poses as a waiter during a strike at a restaurant.*

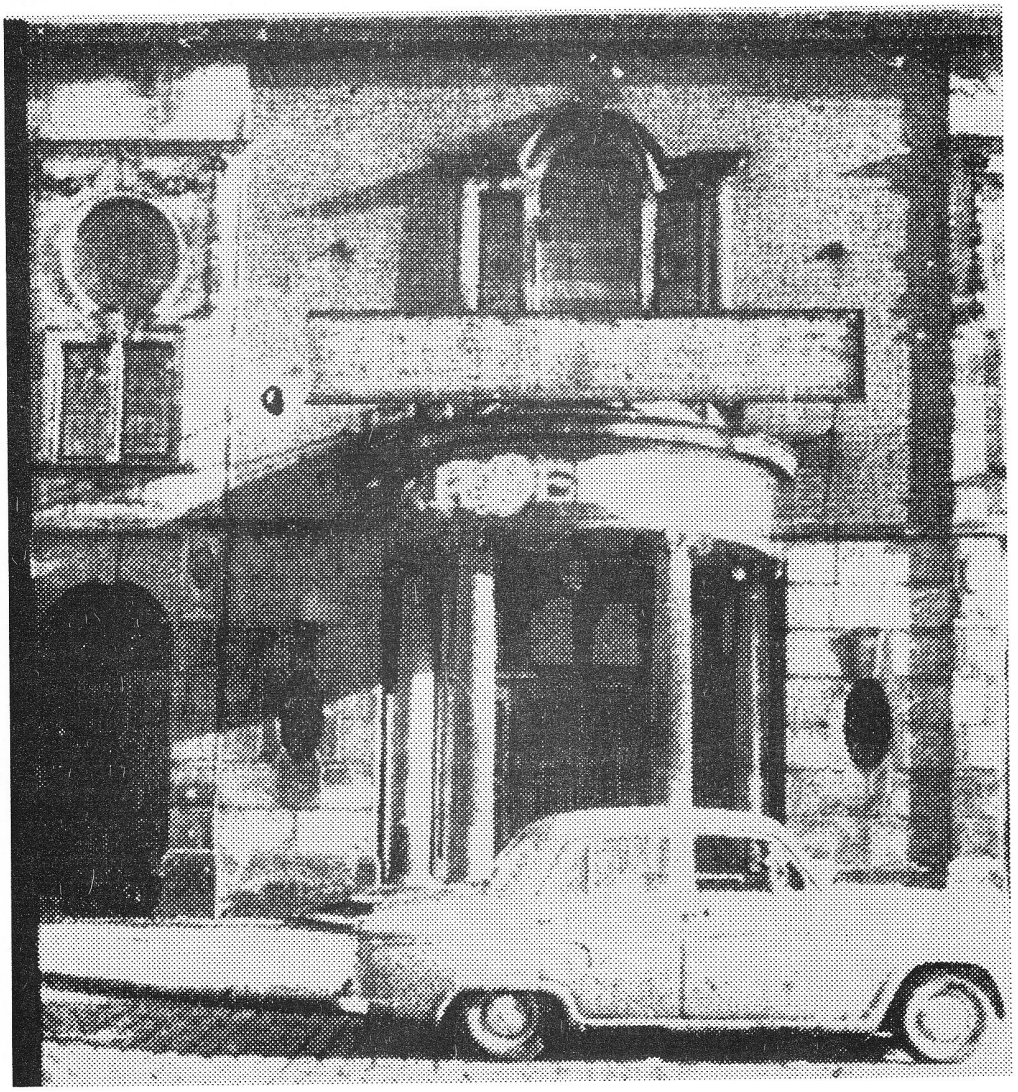


Plate 5 The pillared main entrance of the Queen's - probably in the 50s judging by the car.

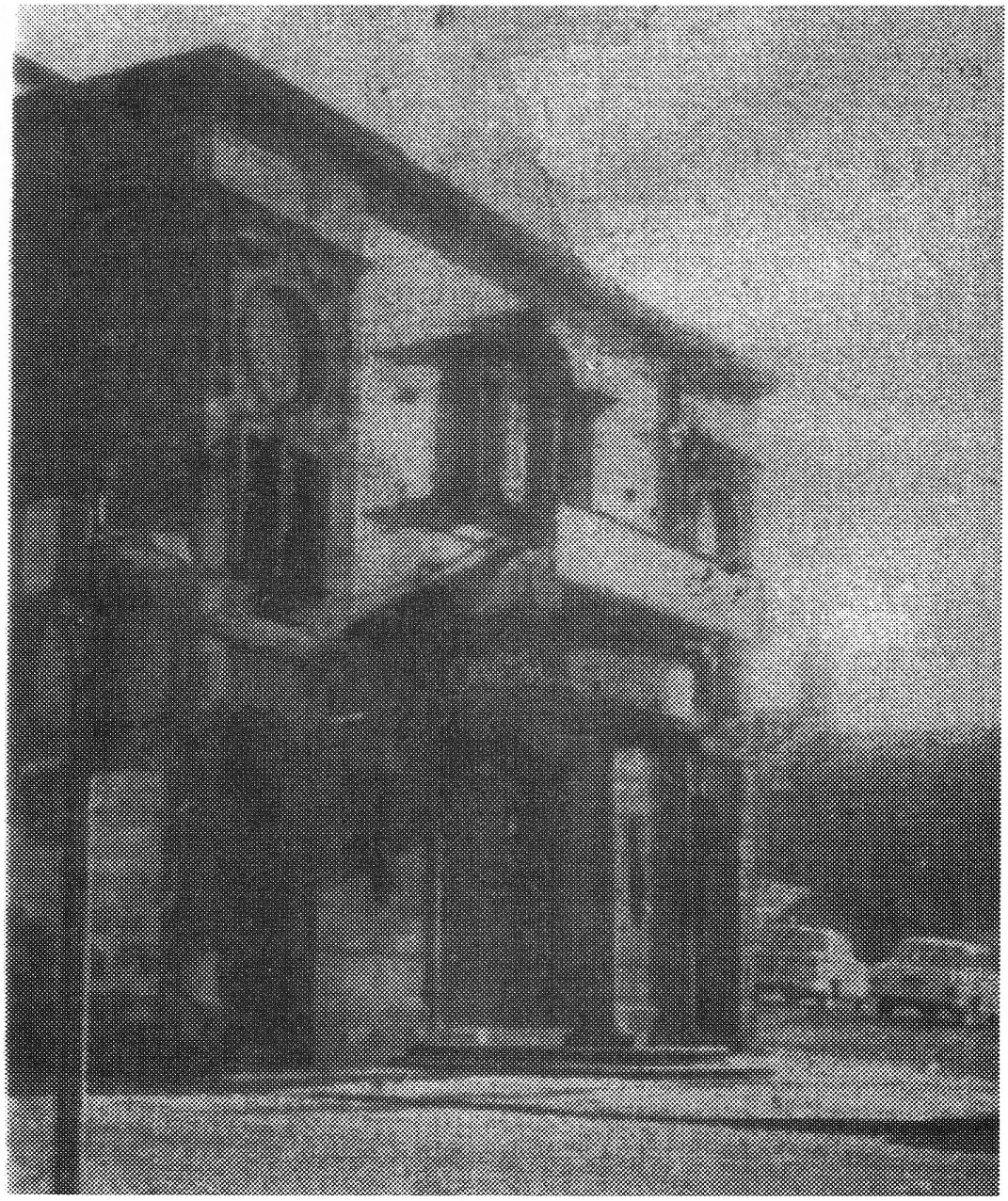


Plate 6 The Queen's in an illustration probably taken on the same day as previous shot.

The *Nelson Leader* of 8 December 1913 carried a mysterious advertisement: *It's almost ready!!! What is??? Watch this space if you want to know.* A week later came the answer: *It's now all ready for you.* ***Queen's Cinema Theatre****, Broad Street, Nelson. Subject to the approval of the magistrates.* The **Queen's** opened on Saturday, 13 December 1913 with 'Caste' (2,000 feet), a comedy drama. On Thursday of the first week it changed to 'Victory or Death' (3,000 feet), a spy film. The Queen's was owned by Nelson Picture Theatres Ltd. The architect was J.T. Harrison of Nelson. Arthur Peel is said to have been involved in the early days. He was to play an important part in Nelson cinema history along with Herbert Hartley, Rupert Whittaker, Sam Lyons and another Mr. Hartley who has not yet entered our history. The Queen's had a semi-circular entrance with pillars, projecting from the

main building. Steps with a marble balustrade led to the circle which had side balconies. The ground floor had a central block of seats with an aisle at each side.

In the early years of the First World War, Belgian refugees were housed in the **Queen's** before being found accommodation.

Although Nelson now had six cinemas, 'Birth of a Nation' was shown at the **Grand Theatre** in 1916. This film was often shown at legitimate theatres rather than cinemas. Afterwards the Grand continued with stage plays, operas, etc.

In 1918 Jack Wilde took over the **Royal** Picture House. He had a cycle shop nearby and his wife ran a corner grocery shop.

In November 1918 Arthur Peel purchased the Electric Palace from Herbert Hartley.

By January 1922 the **New Cinema** had been renamed **Cinema House** and was part of the Victory Theatres Circuit of Arthur Peel. For the week commencing 9 January 1922 it was showing Margarite Leslie in 'The Question'. The name New Cinema was often used whilst it was Cinema House.

Bessie Barriscale in 'The Maid of the Storm', the story of a poor woman who rose to the level of the man she loved (described as *a fine five-part drama*), and a two-reel comedy, 'Help', were advertised for the **Royal** for the week commencing 9 January 1922. This is the last advertisement in the *Nelson Leader* for the **Royal**. Its actual closure date is as uncertain as its opening date. It was to become a church again, for the Church of Christ. When that denomination merged into the United Reformed Church it became a garage.

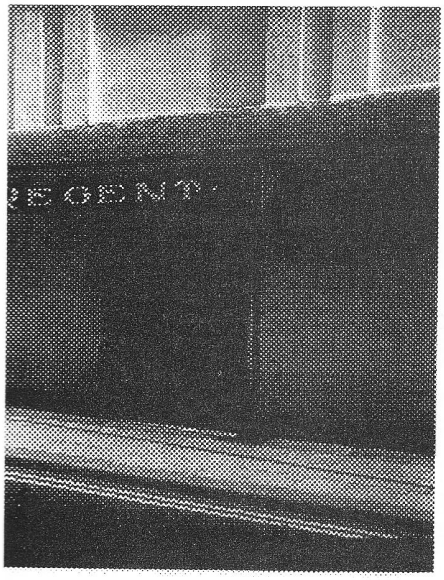
In 1922 E Greenwood was general manager and A H Hague resident manager at the **Palace Theatre**. 'Babes in the Wood', Colne and Nelson Operatic Society in 'Tom Jones', and Lilian Hill, the 'Singing Vampire', were amongst the attractions that year. The Palascope Topical Budget was also part of the shows. After 'The Maid of the Mountains' was presented for the week commencing 17 April, the Palace Theatre became the **Palace Super Cinema** in the ownership of Herbert Hartley. The week commencing 24 April 1922:

> *Stupendous attraction. The most talked of picture of the day. 'Trapped by Mormons'. A thrilling story of the Mormon activities in Lancashire. Written and produced by H B Parkinson, formerly of Nelson. The greatest British picture ever produced. Shall English girls be slaves of the Mormons? Broken hearts and broken lives. Beware of the enemy at your door. The honour of our womanhood is at stake. A tense human story that every man and woman must see. A picture for Nelson by a Nelsonian. Pre-war prices: circle 1/-, stalls 9d, pit 6d, gallery 4d. We pay the tax.*

An advertisement in the *Nelson Leader* of Friday 6 October 1922 read: *Look out for the sandwich board men with the opening date of the Regent Cinema, Leeds Road.* The **Regent Picturedrome** opened on 9 October 1922 with David Powell and Mildred Harris in 'Dangerous Lies'. The programme also included Charlie Chaplin in 'When a Girl Loves'. The Regent was built by Messrs. Liptrot, Flory and Middlebrook. A month after its opening Mr Middlebrook left the partnership. The Regent Picturedrome Co was formed from local businessmen. Mr Morton was the first manager and R H Hartley was the projectionist. Liptrot and Flory left the partnership in the early days of the Regent too. Sam Lyons took over as manager in 1923. Prices: 5d, 9d, 1/-, 1/3 (including tax). Programmes changed on Mondays and Thursdays.

In 1923 Herbert Hartley acquired the **Grand Theatre**. It was altered internally and the gallery was removed. On Saturday 19 January 1924 it re-opened as the **Grand Cinema**. *The interior shape of the building has been altered and it will be possible to have an uninterrupted view of the screen.* Prices: circle 1/-, stalls 9d, *pit*

Plate 7 The Regent as a bingo hall at the horn chamber end. Below, the canopy sign



6d. The first film shown was 'If Winter Comes', an adaptation of the 'most discussed' novel of recent years from the pen of A S M Hutchinson. The Grand had a long foyer at the end of which, on the right, were two flights of stairs. The stairs on the left led up to the stalls; those on the right led to the circle. The Grand auditorium was wide in proportion to its length. The balcony had side balconies.

On 22 May 1925 it was announced:

*The **Electric Palace**. Closed for re-building. All our super productions will be transferred to the New Cinema, Seldon Street, until completion of alterations. Watch for the opening date of Nelson's wonder theatre, the **Majestic**.*

Nelson

Cinema House, Leeds Road. Metro's super play transferred from Electric, 'His Lady's Secretary', founded on the famous comedy, 'Bread'. A deep, swift, moving story of present-day conditions—a slice of real life—the greatest cast ever assembled: Mae Busch, Pat O'Malley, Robert Frazer, Wanda Hawley. First time in Nelson.

The **Majestic** opened on Saturday, 30 October 1925 with Rex Ingram's history-making romance, 'The Arab' in which Ramon Navarro and Alice Terry, the famed film lovers, are co-starred. *It is a whirlwind production, gleaming with beauty, and majestic in the sweep of its narrative. The programme also includes Elinor Glyn's 'His Hour' with John Gilbert and Aileen Pringle.*

Plate 8 The Majestic Picture House with two-colour neon sign. *The Gaunt Stranger* was an Ealing film released in 1938.

For its first full week the Majestic showed 'The Great Divide' with Alice Terry, Conway Tearle, and Wallace Beery. The Majestic orchestra was under Sydney Walton and there was a 'vocal prologue' by F Clegg. Seats, which were numbered and bookable in advance, were priced at: pit stalls 6d, stalls 9d, balcony 1/-, dress

circle 1/6d including tax. There was a single house from Monday to Friday at 7.30pm with two houses on Saturdays at 6.30pm and 8.45pm:

> *The Majestic Picture Hall arises from the ashes of the Electric Palace. Entirely gutted, remodelled and enlarged. Seats 1,134 persons and contains several unique features. The balcony, which accommodates 406 persons, has two side galleries falling towards the stage. This serves the double purpose of providing very good seating and providing exits at the stage end of the theatre with comparatively few steps to the open street. Another unique feature is the small mezzanine circle, providing seating accommodation for about 118 persons. This small gallery possesses an air of seclusion and will be appreciated by people not usually in the habit of going to the pictures and for parties of friends. The lounge where light refreshments will be served is in close proximity. The staircases are comfortable and direct and it is estimated that the building can be emptied in less than three minutes. The seating accommodation throughout is comfortable and roomy, and a good view, uninterrupted by pillars etc, is obtained from every seat. The lighting and decorating effects are most pleasing. Work carried out from plans prepared and under the superintendence of Mr R Jacques, ARIBA, of Nelson. Contracting: Messrs H Ramsbottom & Sons (Acc), Electrical Work: A E Dent. Steel work: Messrs J Webb, Bury. Joinery: Wm Boothman & Sons. Decorating: H Nutter & Son. Plumbing: H Garrick. Fibrous plaster: J A Holdsworth. Seating: W Turner & Co, Birmingham. Tiling: Patterson & Co. Ventilation: Messrs Fryer. Floor coverings and furnishings: Waters & Kidd. Screen by Gardiner Gilt Fibrous Velvet Screen Company, New York.*

Nelson's first cinema, the **Alhambra**, had continued to show films. On Saturday 2 January 1926 'Way Down East' was shown, *possibly the last appearance of this star in Nelson*. The film was also shown at the **De Luxe**. The Alhambra then closed for renovation:

> *Look out for Grand Re-opening on Monday 11th January 1926. Special engagement of 'Live Wires'. Bright music, vocal items, comedy sketches, and vaudeville. Just what you are waiting for.*

A change in the town. It had now become the **Alhambra Theatre of Varieties** and had shown its last film.

The **Grand** had a special new year's day children's carnival with the Chappells Juvenile Dancers as an added attraction. Tom E Astin (the 'swell comedian') and Hoskin and Bright (comedians) were further attractions on New Year's night at the Grand and Palace as well as a full picture programme.

The **Alhambra Theatre of Varieties** duly opened. Performances were once nightly at 7.30pm except for Saturday when there were two houses, at 6.30pm and 8.30pm. Prices: 6d, 9d, 1/-. Seats booked in advance: 1/- and 1/3d. Alterations, redecoration and cleaning had been carried out while it was closed. Charles Gaston was resident manager.

For the week commencing 11 January 1926, the All-York Syncos, the unique jazz band, was an added attraction to the film programme at the **De Luxe**. This was a rare example of live entertainment at this cinema. The **Regent** advertised:

> *Come and hear your favourite music played as it ought to be played by Nelson's Superior Orchestra. To Parents: Send your children where you know they will be looked after and given every attention. Children's matinée programme 7th January 1926: Raymond Griffith (the silk-hatted comedian who is stated to be better than Charlie Chaplin) in 'Miss Bluebeard'. Six reels*

of laughter. Barney Leonard in 'The Jazz Bout'. The best yet of this bunch of boxing pictures. Chapter I of the wonderful serial 'Sampson of the Circus'. 'The House of Flickers', a special Fox comedy.

This was the beginning of the Regent's special Saturday matinées for children which drew children from a wide area to this neighbourhood cinema.

The *Nelson Leader* for 26 February 1926:

***Majestic**. First and only appearance in Nelson of Catlin's Royal Pierrots. Presented by Will Catlin. Ernie Leno (son of the late Dan Leno) character comedian and burlesque dancer. William Parslow, eminent baritone. Reggie Belmont, pianist and accompanist. Victor Keith, popular light comedian. Enid Courtney, soubrette danseuse and mimic. Griffith Moss, humorist. A Musical Revel. Refined as a Musical Comedy. Better than a Revue. Funnier than a Pantomime. Thousands turned away at every town visited by this brilliant company of entertainers. The Show You Must See. Seats Booking Fast. Better Book in Advance.*

This was a rare live show at the **Majestic** which otherwise presented film fare with occasionally a vocalist to sing songs appropriate to the film. On 19 March the Seven Nobodies, the **Douglas Palace** favourites, appeared at the Majestic in a live show. It then reverted to films.

In June 1926 both the Palace and the Alhambra closed.

The New Alhambra. The Premier ideal C.P. Theatre. Managing Director: Herbert Hartley. General Manager: Chas. Gaston. Closed for extensive alterations. Re-decoration, re-seating. Watch for opening date.

The *Nelson Leader* 18 June:

Alhambra. Baths v Modern C.P. Theatre. Thousands daily watch this wonderful transformation act. Thousands of enquiries for opening date. Kind regards - good wishes to all.

The **Palace** re-opened on Monday 28 June 1926 after renovation and alterations with a *splendid holiday programme*, Tom Mix and Tony the Wonder Horse in 'Conquering Blood'. British News was shown at the Palace and the Grand.

On 3 July **Cinema House** closed for alterations. The last films shown were: George Larkin and Fritz Ridgeway in 'Boomerang Justice', a *magnificent drama of daring adventure, romance and thrills*, and 'A Cloudy Romance', a two-part special comedy. This was the end of silent films at the **New Cinema/Cinema House**.

In July 1926 it was reported that William Bailey had been killed in a road accident at Port Talbot. He was a Nelson cinema violinist, taught by Johny Anderson, former leader at **Burnley Hippodrome** (**Burnley Palace**). Three other brothers were musicians: David, a flautist at Exeter, formerly at the **Queen's**, Charles at **Burnley Savoy**, and Harry, a pianist at **Nelson Palace** and **Alhambra**.

The **New Cinema** re-opened as the **Tivoli Theatre** on 2 August 1926 with performances nightly at 7.30pm and at 6.30pm and 8.45pm on Saturdays:

Grand opening of Nelson's new concert party theatre. Vernon Harvey and Edgar Taylor present: Autumn Follies. A mélange of taste without a moment's waste. Cast: Vernon Harvey, character actor and ventriloquist; Edgar Taylor, the modern light comedian and dancer; Empsie Harlow, comedienne and dancer; Beatrice Eveline, soprano; Molly Lyons, descriptive character vocalist; Horace Stanton, pianist entertainer; Dan Lewis,

Broadcaster of Mirth. Popular prices: pit stalls 6d, stalls 9d, balcony 1/-, inc. tax. Advance booking extra.

The **New Alhambra** opened on the same day, 2 August 1926:

Nelson's elaborate, modernised, and original C.P. Theatre. We shall present and absolutely defy competition with the superior attraction, the Welsh Co-Optomists of 1924. An evening's entertainment that will bear the morning's reflection. Cast includes: Charlie O'Neill, comedian; May Vincent, mezzo-soprano; Madge Edwards, pianist; George Williams, versatile baritone; Jessie Williams, contralto; Will Davies, the famous Welsh tenor; specialities by 'Olga' and her six Frizzy Kids, the most wonderful juvenile troupe of international and classical dancers now appearing before the British public. Don't miss this show. Mon - Fri 7.30, Sat 6.30, 8.30. Something attempted, something done - come, see, and judge for yourself.

The **Alhambra** had been entirely reconstructed, re-decorated and refurnished:

The public of Nelson will only be able to recognise this theatre (and undoubtedly the pioneer of public entertainment on an original basis during the past 40 years) by the exterior, this being the only part of the building left standing with the addition of a new entrance. The best companies are booked to appear.

*Extensive alterations at the New Cinema, or **Tivoli** as it is now known. Rows of seats have been removed and a large stage erected. This has an elaborately decorated front and figured curtain. Little has been done in the way of alterations to the auditorium, for this was unnecessary, a splendid view of the stage being available from all parts of the theatre. In fact the Tivoli is an ideal place for a concert party theatre, being roomy, yet not so large as to lose the intimate atmosphere so necessary for this style of entertainment.*

In August 1926 the **Regent** dropped 'Picturedrome' from its advertisements. In October, Ada Preston, soprano, direct from the North Pier, Blackpool, was an added attraction to the films at the Regent. The **Palace** was showing Rudolph Valentino in 'Blood and Sand', with special music by the Palace orchestra under T Haydn Boothman. The **Majestic** showed the film 'Vaudeville' and Albert Pryor, the *renowned tenor who created a sensation on his last visit* was to give selections from his repertoire. Colne and Nelson Operatic Society gave 'The Quaker Girl' at Nelson **Palace** in the first week of November. Prices: stalls 3/6d, circle 2/4d, pit 1/-, gallery 6d.

The rivalry between the **Alhambra** and the **Tivoli** as concert-party theatres continued until December 1926. The **Tivoli** then became a repertory theatre with the Nelson Repertory Players, E Vivian Edmonds supported by Gladys Ford-Howett. On 27, 28 and 29 December they gave 'The Maid of the Mill' and Thursday, Friday and Saturday 'Her Only Son', both plays by E Vivian Edmonds. The **Alhambra** said *A race well run and a race well won.* Concert-parties and variety at the **Alhambra** and plays at the **Tivoli** were to continue for many years.

In January 1927 a live pantomime, 'Ali Baba's Forty Thieves', was put on at the **Palace**. In February it was pictures and variety and a Charleston competition there. The **Regent** had a beauty competition.

A fire destroyed the stage at the **Palace** in late February. It had a Grand Re-opening on Easter Monday, 11 April: *Times and Prices as usual. New seating. New*

scenery. New decorations. Herbert Rawlinson and Eva Novak in 'The Millionaire Policeman'.

In May the **Queen's**, which had had a very uneventful history up to this time, announced a special engagement of Wally Read, banjoist of the Morelli Band on the BBC as an added attraction to the normal film shows.

On Monday 6 June the **Palace** went over to Repertory with the David Garrick Players in a *first class selection of plays, dramas and comedies*. The first production was 'The Man who Stayed at Home', a 'gripping' spy play by Lechmere Worrall and J E Harold Terry, from the Apollo and Royalty theatres, London. In July the David Garrick Co gave 'The Face at the Window', a melodrama which had been played at the Grand many years earlier.

For the week beginning 3 October the Nelson Players were in 'Jane' at the **Tivoli**, a Sir Charles Hawtrey production. In October Arthur Leslie and Betty Morton made a welcome return to the Tivoli. Arthur Leslie later became famous as Jack Walker in 'Coronation Street'. On Friday 30 December the Tivoli had, 'by special request', the Variety Entertainment as presented on the Anniversary NIght. Then plays resumed.

In January 1928 'Mother Goose' was the pantomime at the **Palace** and 'Dick Whittington' was given at the **Tivoli**. The **Regent** advertised 'cloakroom provided free'. The **De Luxe** had a special advertisement for the *event of the season*:

> *Week commencing 20th February: 'The Battles of Coronel and the Falkland Islands'. The might of Britain sweeps the seas. 35 ships. 40,000 men. 30 tons explosives. Fifty million pounds worth of British Navy employed in this production. Admittedly the most realistic naval battles ever filmed. Admiral Sturdee v Admiral Von Spee. 6.45 , 8.45. Thurs, Fri, Sat: 'Blighty'. A war picture but no battle scenes. To see this picture after seeing American war films is like going home. A picture in which the horrors of war are left alone. 6.45, 8.45.*
>
> A picture of ships is shown in this advertisement.

At the **Palace** in the week beginning 8 April, Colne Vocal Harmonists in conjunction with the David Garrick Players presented 'Wycoller Dene' by Frank Slater of Colne. From 19 March for the week Colne and Nelson Operatic Society appeared in 'Madame Pompadour'. The following week the Palace commenced a short film season with 'What Price Glory'. The Palace had occasional revues, and Colne and Nelson Operatic Society gave 'The Dancing Mistress' for the week beginning 22 October, but otherwise the Palace showed films. From 26 November the Palace had a week of Shakespeare's plays presented by R Meadows White and E. Warren Stapleton and the Pastoral Players. Monday - Wednesday 'The Merchant of Venice' and Thursday - Saturday 'Othello' with R. Meadows White playing Shylock and Othello.

Nelson cinemas did not open on a Sunday in those days and for many years to come. Once a year, however, they had a Cinema Sunday, when some of the cinemas opened with all proceeds going to charity. On Sunday 9 December 1928 the **Queen's** had a Grand Concert and entertainment given by Nelson Conservative Male Voice Choir with an augmented orchestra under Rennie Gott. The **Majestic** screened Lillian Gish in 'The Scarlet Letter' and also had the Nelson Operatic Quartette.

There was a Grand Concert by the Nelson Excelsior Glee Union at the **Regent Picturedrome** (kindly lent) on Sunday 6 January 1929. For the week commencing 21 January the **Palace** had the pantomime, 'Dick Whittington'. The **Majestic** showed 'On with the Motley', the '1929 sensation': *The world's greatest*

cinematograph vocal and musical novelty. Film and trio. Second to none. Human Talkies.

On Sunday 27 January Nelson Football Club had a Grand Concert at the **Queen's Cinema** with Nelson Glee and Madrigal Society. Gaumont Graphic was shown at the **Palace** and the **Grand**. There was a Grand Concert at the **Majestic** on Sunday 10 February for the Smallholders, Allotments and Horticultural Society. Week commencing 1 April the Royal Continental Stage Circus (20 distinct acts) appeared at the **Palace**. The *Nelson Leader* of 5 April reported that the **Tivoli** had been completely redecorated. The **Palace** and **Grand** both had eve of poll meetings for the 1929 general election after the first-house film shows. The **Palace** closed for two weeks in June for renovations and re-seating. It re-opened on 1 July with Clive Brook and Gilda Gray in 'The Devil Dancer' and 'Alex the Great'.

The **Palace** had live shows in August, a musical comedy, 'Bird's Nest' in the week beginning 5 August, and Samson, the 'strongest man in the world' headed the bill in the week beginning 19 August. At the end of August the Nelson Players ended their season at the **Tivoli**, 'What Happened to Jones' being their last play. They had a Nelson Players' benefit at the second house on the Friday: *A Grand Variety Show. Nelson Players supported by local artistes.*

For the week commencing 2 September:

> ***Tivoli*** *- Nelson Repertory Theatre announce expensive engagement of entirely new company of all star artistes - the Tivoli Repertory Co. (From* ***Theatre Royal, Blackburn****) in 'The Man from Toronto'. Cast includes Alfred B. Kennedy, Eugene Bruno, Frank Boye-Benton, E W Bretton, Margaret Johnson, Kathleen Grattan, Bela Munro, Amy Doreen, Nina Gerrard. Jack C Davis, scene artist, will play small parts when required.*

The **Grand** showed 'The Melody Maker', the beautiful love drama of Franz Schubert in the week beginning 16 September: *Something different in pictures. Vocal prologue and accompanist in costume by Miss Nita Rosslyn.*

It was mainly pictures at the **Palace** in 1929 but with occasional revues, variety shows and the local operatic society show. On Sunday 15 December there was a Festival of Music at the **Palace Hippodrome**, Nelson, in aid of Reedyford Hospital. This was a rare use of its official name, Nelson Palace and Hippodrome. Reedyford Hospital had begun as an auxiliary military hospital in the First World War, based on Reedyford House. After the war it was proposed to retain and extend it as a hospital for Nelson as the town's war memorial. The new buildings were formally opened on 31 July 1937 but meanwhile there was a lengthy fund-raising campaign.

The **Palace** closed for the week beginning 16 December for renovations and cleaning, re-opening on 23 December with *a mile a minute revue* - 'Sweet Pepper'. Sometime in 1929 the **Queen's** must have been acquired by Herbert Hartley's group. Herbert Hartley had a partner, Billy Robert, a local dentist. This company now controlled the **Palace**, **Grand** and **Queen's**. Herbert Hartley also owned the **Alhambra** but it must have been as a separate company.

The first talkie in Nelson was at the **Queen's** on 24 February 1930. It was 'Sharp Tools' (Warner Bros.) which was shown with 'Giving In' (Hedda Hopper and Murray Delph) and a short comedy, 'The Love Trap' (Laura La Plante). The sound system was by a local man, Billy Graham, of Brierfield. It was not a success and the Queen's reverted to silent films.

The **Grand** and **Majestic** went over to talkies on the same day, 10 March 1930. The **Grand** showed 'Broadway' and the **Majestic** showed 'Hollywood Revue' with Marion Davies, Joan Crawford and John Gilbert. They both used the Western

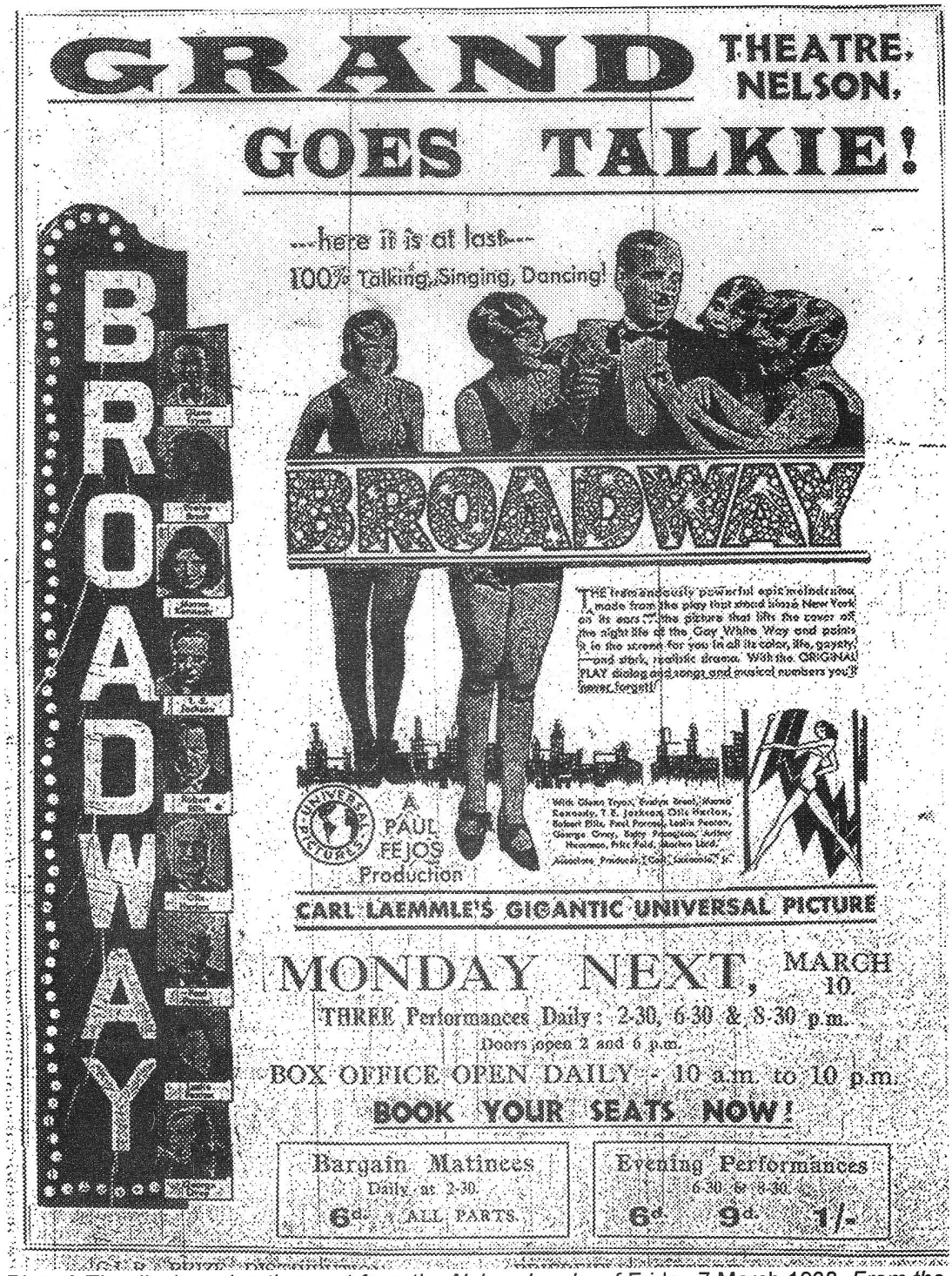


Plate 9 The display advertisement from the *Nelson Leader* of Friday 7 March 1930. *From the Nelson Local History Library Collection.*

Electric sound system. Lon Cheney in 'While the City Sleeps' and 'White Shadow of the South Seas' with Raquell Torres and Monte Blue closed the silent era at the **Majestic**. Mary Astor in 'New Year's Eve' was the **Grand's** last silent film. W.J. Fender was the manager at the **Grand** and **Queen's** in 1930. S.E. Sayers managed the **Palace**. The Palace had more live shows at the beginning of 1930 with silent films in other weeks. The **Palace**, **Queen's** and **Regent** emphasised their orchestras: *No canned music at the Queen's.*

The **Palace** was the next to go talkie, on Monday 14 April 1930 with Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell in 'Sunny Side Up'. Western Electric was the system used. 'The Singing Fool' was shown at the **Majestic** for three days from 1 May.

On 14 July the **Queen's** went over to talkies with the Western Electric sound system, with John Boles in 'The Desert Song' and from Thursday 17 July, 'The Singing Fool'. The Queen's continued to use silent second features for a while. The last wholly silent programme was 'Thunderbolt' and 'Love and the Devil' (12 July).

The **Regent** continued to show silent films until 30 May 1931. After showing Lon Cheney in 'Phantom of the Opera' it went talkie with Western Electric sound system. 'Common Clay' with Constance Bennet was the first talkie shown on 1 June. The Regent was the last but one of the Nelson houses still then running as silent cinemas but made great play of its sound system afterwards. The Western Electric logo featured on the end wall of the Regent and in its newspaper advertisements. It adopted the motto: *Regent. Sound at its best.*

The **Tivoli** Nelson Repertory Co. gave 'The Last of Mrs. Cheney' as its last play for the week commencing 15 June. George Baker had been manager since March. For the week commencing 6 July the Lavender Club (variety) was presented. It then continued as a variety theatre.

The *Nelson Leader* had an advertisement on Friday, 21 August 1931:

> ***De Luxe**. Monday August 24th and week. The last week after 22 years non-stop record. Farewell to the silent screen. Opening on September 7th with the only All British Apparatus in Nelson. Made in England by British Workmen. The Famous British Thompson-Houston Company, Rugby. Also the latest Kalee cinematograph machines manufactured by Kershaw at Leeds.*

The last silent films were Max Schelling in 'The Love Ring', and 'The Tigress'. It was then closed for talkie installation. Its first talkie was Tom Walls in 'Rookery Nook'. Performances were twice nightly at 6.40pm and 8.45pm. Popular prices: 4d, 5d, and 6d. Rupert Whittaker had adopted the motto *Silence is Golden* after the other cinemas had gone talkie. Rain pattering on the corrugated roof of the **De Luxe** then became a problem.

The **Tivoli** closed for one week only (9 October) for alterations: *In preparation Geo. A Baker's Local Super Cabaret Show. Every member of the company is resident in Nelson.*

'Get Friendly Nelson' opened on Wednesday 28 October with Bert Battye, Edgar Metcalfe and Mabel Battye. It was retained for the following week. On 9 November the **Tivoli** opened as the **Tivoli Talking Theatre**, with Marie Dressler in 'Reducing' together with 'The Rainbow Man' showing Monday - Wednesday. Prices 5d, 7d, 9d, and 1/-. Children half price. Monday - Friday 7.30pm, Saturday 6.30pm and 8.45pm. The sound was by Cinephone. It also advertised *searchlight projection.* Mr.Baker ended his period at the Tivoli in October.

In 1932 R G Warner was manager at the **Palace**, W J Seymour at the **Grand**. W J Fender at the **Queen's**, and Sam Lyons was still managing the **Regent**. The **Tivoli** was under new management from 15 February when 'Toast of the Legion' was shown, starring Bernice Claire and Edward Everett Horton.

After showing Norma Shearer in 'A Free Soul' on 23 April, the **Tivoli** closed for alterations. It re-opened on Monday 2 May with the latest and most up-to-date talkie equipment, the Western Electric Super 1932 model. (*There's nothing like it!*).

John Hart was now manager at the **Grand**.

Frank H Fortescue's Famous Players were at the **Alhambra** from 2 May, commencing with 'The Sign on the Door'. Plays changed mid week. On 1 June the Alhambra had a local revue. For the week commencing 18 August the Rector of Stiffkey, Reverend Harold F. Davidson MA, was on stage.

Nelson

In August Sam Lyons retired as manager of the **Regent**. He was succeeded by R H Hartley, its first projectionist (not of the same family as Herbert Hartley).

At the end of October, prices were reduced at the **Alhambra**: stalls 6d, back circle 9d, front circle 1/-. The *Nelson Leader* for 11 November announced future alterations at the **Palace**, **Grand** and **Queen's**. *A.V.O. The Symbol of Entertainment Supreme.* A V Ollerenshaw had taken them over on lease. I was told that Mr Roberts made the deal while Mr Hartley was away on holiday, and he was none too pleased when he returned. In March 1933 they advertised: *Always Very Outstanding entertainment at the Palace, Grand and Queen's.* The **Palace** had a stage show with the Soga-Hirakawa Japanese Troupe as top of the bill. Louise and Frank Formby appeared on stage at the **Alhambra** in the week commencing 13 March. 'The Mikado' was given by St.John's Operatic Society at the Alhambra for the week beginning 27 March. There were pictures and variety at the **Palace** for the week beginning 5 June with a One Hour Revue and the film 'The Pride of the Legion'. The **Alhambra** closed for a summer vacation from 13 June until 4 September. For the week of 11 September the **Palace** had a stage show, 'Paris by Night' and the **Alhambra** had the Western Circus and Variety.

A report in the *Nelson Leader* on 8 September:

> *Justices and Cinemas...magistrates had visited the whole of the halls and were well satisfied with the condition in which the premises were kept. In some cases a slight improvement could be made in the lighting and in the provision of fire extinguishing apparatus. They drew attention to the importance of ventilation especially when two shows were held. All doors should be opened.* [They commented on the] *unfair practice at some halls of putting reserved tickets on seats that were not reserved .*

The **Regent Picturedrome's** effort for Reedyford Hospital on Sunday 5 November was advertised fulsomely:

> *Jan Kiepura, the screen's greatest tenor, in 'Tell me Tonight'. The sensation of Europe that you must hear even again and possibly for the last time. Film kindly loaned by the manager of W & F Film Co, M/c. free of charge. Regent loaned free of charge. Leader have given the advert. Every penny for the hospital. Staff have given their services.*

> *6 November 1933. Palace. Colne and Nelson Operatic Society: 'Miss Hook of Holland'. Following week's film: 'King Kong'.*

The *Nelson Leader* of 17 November showed a picture of the booking office at 30 Scotland Road for 'Cavalcade', showing at both the **Grand** and **Queen's** cinemas for the week commencing 27 November:

> *Over 2,000 have already reserved seats for this 'Picture of a Generation'. An even greater demand expected during coming week. 250 unbookable pit seats available at each performance at each of the two theatres. Prices: circle 1/- (booked 1/3d) stalls 9d (booked 1/-), Pit 7d.*

Noel Cowards's 'Cavalcade' starred Diana Wyngard, Clive Brook, and Herbert Mundin.

Films were the normal fare at the **Palace** at this time, but in January 1934 the pantomime 'Cinderella' was staged for a week and St.John's Operatic Society put on 'Katinka' at the end of the month. The **Regent** had the film 'Damaged Lives', about the 'facts of life' for a full week commencing 28 February, for adults only. The cinema normally changed programmes mid-week.

Palace, Grand and Queen's. Warning! Don't gamble with your entertainment. There is no shortage of stars in Nelson. Visit the theatre where the stars shine brightest. A V O's Big picture drive. Palace: Ronald Colman in 'Masquerade'. Grand: Sylvia Sydney and H B Warner in 'Jennie Gerhardt'. Queen's: Edna May Oliver in 'It's Great to be Alive'.

advt. *Nelson Leader* 2 March 1934

On 1 June the *Nelson Leader* advertised that the **Alhambra** would be closed for a short period during the summer. The **Queen's** closed after the last performance on 9 June for two weeks for decorating and re-seating and 'installation of the latest appliances'. The **Palace** had a stage show:

Jack Taylor presents his latest revue, '1001 Marvels'. 500 magnificent costumes. 16 spectacular scenes. 60 artistes. Costumes on display in vestibule at Palace. We have 500 seats at 7d and 500 seats at 5d unreserved at all performances. You can still reserve standing room at 1/- for Saturday 1st and 2nd houses.

Monday 25 June. Grand Re-opening of Nelson's luxury cinema, the Queen's. New seating and new colour scheme, plus the newest of stars, Katherine Hepburn and Douglas Fairbanks junr. in 'Morning Glory'. Work done by local firms. Waters and Kidd (carpets and curtains), H Nutter & Sons (decorating), F Wright (joinery), Corts (upholstery and linoloeum).

Week commencing 3 September. Alhambra. Nelson's only Variety Theatre. Re-opens after renovation. Stan Sanders Presents 'Look Lively'.

There was variety at the Palace the following week with 'The Castellians'.

Week commencing 22 October. Tivoli: All week on the stage, Peggy Holgate, Nelson's favourite, assisted by Fred in comedy, singing, dancing and music. Walter Barker, the singing vagabond. Winifred Woods at the piano.

An article in the *Nelson Leader* for 26 October 1934:

A V O Leaving Nelson. Resigned as managing director of local cinemas. Mr A V Ollerenshaw (A V O as he is known) is leaving Nelson in the near future. Resigned as managing director of A V O Cinemas, Ltd, Palace, Grand and Queen's, and is likely to take up a position in the south of England. At present he is managing director of the Riviera Cinema, Manchester, and has other interests in the cinema world. A V O formed A V O Cinemas, which took over the Palace, Grand and Queen's two and a half years ago. Very successful. Mr.Ollerenshaw was one of the founders of the newly formed Nelson Football Club, and is on the Board of Directors. (He is not resigning at least till the end of the season.)

Hartley Cinemas took control again.

St.John's Operatic Society gave 'Rose Marie' at the **Palace** in the week commencing 12 November. Cinema Sunday was held at the **Majestic**, **Queen's** and **Regent** on 18 November. Nelson and Colne Labour Players gave two plays at the **Alhambra** in the week commencing 26 November, 'Souls in Hell' and 'Power and Poverty'. There was a 'Real French Revue' on stage at the **Palace** from 28 December for the week. The old favourite musical, 'Lily of Killarney', was the film at the **De Luxe** for three days.

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In February 1935, Colne and Nelson Operatic Society gave 'No, No Nanette' at the **Palace**. For three days (8-10 April) the Palace showed the film Hitler banned, 'Mörgenrot': *Is Hitler right? See it and judge for yourself.*

Week commencing 17 June 1934. ***Grand*** *closed for Re-seating, Re-decorating, and Re-lighting. Grand Re-opening 29 June. The super cinema with the super shows.* It re-opened with 'It Happened One Night' with Claudette Colbert.

The **Majestic** closed for the week commencing 24 June for re-decorating. It re-opened on Thursday 4 July at 2.30pm with 'Java Head'. Hospital Sunday was marked at the **Majestic** and **Queen's** on 16 November.

Two important changes took place in 1936. The **Alhambra** went over to films on 29 August with Shirley Temple in 'Brighteyes'. The latest Western Electric sound system had been installed. Nelson's first cinema had been a variety house for nearly nine years. Jimmy Clitheroe made his debut there in a talent contest. Dr. Walford Brodie, Tubby Turner and Donald Peers had all appeared there. The last live show advertised at the Alhambra had been for the week commencing 27 May: *The Gay Wayfarers. Prior to their season at the North Pier, Blackpool. Ernie Moss, the popular comedian.*

The **Tivoli** had another name change, to the **Capitol**, from 7 September, when it screened 'In Callente' with Dolores Del Rio, Pat O'Brien and Glenda Farrell, together with Guy Cibbee in 'Wanderlust' for the first three days and 'Casino de Paree' (Glenda Farrell and Al Jolson) with full supporting programme for the rest of the week. The last film at the Tivoli had been James Cagney in 'The Irish In Us' in the week beginning 22 August. The cinema had been 'beautified' throughout in harmonious shades of green:

> *It produces an atmosphere of comforting restfulness. Rubber armed seats throughout. Comfort has been the aim of the management. A number of seats have been sacrificed to give more comfort. Since re-decoration the Capitol has increased its patronage.*

The **Regent** had closed from 14 to Saturday, 27 June when it was re-opened with Victor McLaglen and Margot Goohane in 'The Informer'. It had been completely redecorated. The latest talkie equipment, Western Electric Wide Range system, had been installed:

> *Talking pictures under conditions which equal the finest in America and Europe, in a hall which will be the finest in the district. The latest screen, stage colour lighting and curtains that will surpass any in the district. Pictures and sound that cannot be equalled. Be one of the first to hear Wide Range. The only set within a radius of 25 miles. The interior is the last word in modern decoration. Complete absence of elaborate ornamental and panelling effects. The walls are a beautiful blend of colour, starting with orange and harmoniously moving through all the colours of the spectrum to finish with mauve. The balcony front is a new shade of Regent green with bands of glittering metal and the arch surrounding the screen has been treated with combined plastic paint with moulds in gold and silver. The dado is mottled in fawn and sepia. The entrance staircase is a shaded effect varying from tangerine to ivory and mottled in orange and sienna. Black skirtings and green risers complete the original effect. Nelson Co-op. did the painting. Curtains by J.T. Bolton's of Russell Street. The curtains reflect in kalaedoscopic fashion the varying hues contained in them Joinery by Duerdens, Elizabeth Street. H H Lockwood did the plastering. Hear it on* [Western Electric] *Wide Range and hear the difference.*
>
> The **Alhambra** had also installed Wide Range sound.

The film at the **Palace** for the week commencing 30 November was 'On Top of the World' by Harry B Parkinson of Blackho. It featured Lancashire lass Betty Fields (Gracie's sister):

> *The first talkie to be filmed in the district. With local scenes at Applegarth* [Herbert Hartley's home], *Nelson, Barrowford, Blackho Hill and Salterforth village. A Lancashire Story - Star - Scene - Author - Clog Dancer.*

The Regent Mickey Mouse Club News was featured in the *Nelson Leader* of 1 January 1937:

> *The Regent Mickey Mouse Club was formed in August 1936 by the manager, Mr R H Hartley, who is Chief Mickey Mouse and along with Mrs A Holt (chief cashier) who is Chief Minnie Mouse at the cinema, the Club has been a great success. Its objects are to instruct children in safety-first rules, to be truthful, honourable and useful good citizens, to help the aged, the helpless and younger children, and to help charities whenever possible. During November and December four sacks of silver paper were collected for Reedyford Hospital. Special programmes are to be arranged on Saturday afternoons and competitions throughout the year. Membership expected to reach 1,000 this week.*

Each member received a bag of sweets on Saturday 2 January. The mayor of Nelson visited the Regent Mickey Mouse Club in March to receive six sacks of silver paper and three sacks of potatoes for Reedyford Hospital. The photograph accompanying the report showed R H Hartley (Chief Mickey), Mrs Holt (Chief Minnie) and J Nadin, director of the Regent Picturedrome Co.

Stage shows seemed more regular than film shows at the **Palace** at this time. The **Grand** had Universal Talking News and the **Majestic** had Gaumont British News. On 14 May 1937 the **Regent** was in the news again:

> *Now installed. Western Electric Mirrophonic sound system. Vivid human intensity, real talking pictures become so life like it seems as if the stars are actually in the cinema. Hear it on 24 May.*

The **Palace** closed for alterations and re-decoration from Monday 14 June. The **Regent** had a Sunday excursion to Skegness by rail on 6 June. 500 patrons took part. The **Palace** re-opened on 28 June with Lew Ayres in 'Murder with Pictures' showing Monday - Wednesday. The entrance to the Palace had been re-arranged and modernised:

> *...subtly dimmed lighting effects. The pale pastel shade which is a major feature of this latest example of decorative modernity certainly endows the place with a bright, clean atmosphere so essential to the encouragement of mental relaxation which precedes a genuine enjoyment of pictorial presentation. The walls in one part of the cinema are shaded up and rubber stippled in a pleasant orange shade, whilst in another portion they are sprayed with plastic paint which gives a pretty pebble-dashed effect. The ceiling panel is done in plastic paint, riddle combed and subtly shaded out from luscious cream to soft blue. The mouldings and enrichments are picked out in umber and platinum bronze, and the cornice shaded from tangerine to cream. The main entrance has been brightened by shades of horizontal bands starting from buff to cream, whilst the ceiling is done in plastic. The pay box is shining stainless steel and stretches for the whole width of the entrance thereby relieving the possibility of congestion. W Bootham and Sons, joinery and reconstruction work; H Nutter and Son, painting and*

decorating; Corts have supplied new door curtains and pelmets in rich blue velvet. The pelmets are trimmed with gold braids; they have also upholstered the circle and put rails and laid carpet in the pit. H Craven, plumbing and chrome fittings, etc; R White and Sons, plastering (plain and ornamental in entrance); A E Dent, electric signs. Forthcoming stage productions listed. Pictures and Variety.

Week commencing 9 August, *Grand opening of East Lancashire's newest and largest Mirrophonic sound system (*at the **Grand**). *Fred McMurray and Jack Oakie in 'Champagne Waltz' Exclusive to Grand and Queen's: Official opening of Reedyford Hospital. Crowning of Hospital Queen. Scenes of procession.*

The **Majestic** advertised: *Best for pictures. Best for sound. The family entertainment house. Western Electric system. The voice of action.*

The **Regent** advertised: *Sound at its best.*

The **De Luxe** had kept going since its opening day with only one major change - when it went over to talkies. Rupert Whittaker had managed it since it opened. In October 1938 Rupert died, aged 58. The De Luxe carried on.

Oswald Mosley gave a speech at the **Palace** on Sunday 19 March 1939. In April a cinema van toured the district for three days showing government propaganda films plus a Will Hay film and a Walt Disney cartoon. The Palace was still having plenty of stage shows. The **Majestic** had Gaumont British News and the **Grand** had Universal News at this time, but went over to Movietone News later in the year.

After showing Errol Flynn in 'Robin Hood' on Saturday 10 June 1939, the **De Luxe** closed down. It next advertised in the *Nelson Leader* of 16 June:

Under entirely new management. This weekend. Final showing of 'Captain Blood'. Mon & Tues 19th and 20th 'Ever Since Eve' also 'Empty Holsters'. Wed 'The Great O'Malley'. Thurs, Fri and Sat, 'Bullets or Ballots', also 'The Viper'.

War-time

There were no more advertisements for the **De Luxe** until January 1940, when the programme changed on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and seat prices were 4d, 5d, and 6d.

The *Nelson Leader* for 13 September 1940 had this report:

De Luxe Cinema licence renewal refused by Nelson magistrates. Application by R H Greenwood refused because of dilapidated condition of the premises. It did not comply with the regulations appertaining to the Cinematograph Act or with the regulations of the justices. The building was of corrugated iron fastened on a wooden frame, and it was in a very dilapidated condition. The sanitary arrangements were poor and filthy, and the woodwork was old and rotten. The building accomodated 500 people. The projection room was small and there was not sufficient protection. The whole building had been allowed to go into decay. Inspector Longbottom said the corrugated iron was corroded and rain penetrated through some parts of the roof. The seating was old and torn in places and the whole premises were in a filthy condition. He considered the building unsafe and unsuitable for a cinema. The owner stated, 'The hall had been closed for a few months. The walls were being swept and the place was going to be re-painted prior to re-opening. The dirt was there because it was being cleaned up. Some of the corrugated iron wanted replacing but it was not much worse than it had been for a number of years and no objection had been raised.'

Roland Hartley, building inspector for the Corporation said the roof was badly corroded and some iron sheets were loose and likely to be blown away in a storm. The woodwork inside needed much attention. The premises were erected in August 1910 and very considerable repairs were required. The building was unsafe, the outside covering being in a terrible condition. It was impossible to make the building suitable for present-day requirements. The opening into the operating room was only about two feet square and a person had to go almost on his knees to get inside. It was not a properly constructed room, nor was the winding room, and there was not a proper exit. Mr. Greenwood: 'I think the licence ought to be renewed. I don't intend opening until it is rebuilt.' The Clerk (Mr Hindle): 'Do you say this building is fit to be re-opened in its present condition?' 'No.' The Clerk: 'The bench cannot grant a renewal of something which is not fit at the present time. Do you admit that it is not fit at the present time?' Mr Greenwood: 'Yes, if that is the law.' Supt Pickering: 'You also agree that the place is not now suitable?' Mr Greenwood: 'I do agree, but it can be made suitable. It was my intention to build a brick shell round the building. That is the only reason I am holding the licence.' The mayor (Ald H W Throup): 'What have you done to make the building fit?' 'It was no use spending £100 on the building if the licence was going to be refused. I maintain that when it is cleaned it is no worse than it has been for a few years. It is dirty now because the painters were coming in. I have accounts for sanitary repairs. It would not have been opened until it was painted, repaired and cleaned up.'

The **De Luxe** was not repaired: it was demolished. A nursery school was put up on its site. The last film advertised was 'Confessions of a Nazi Spy' with Edward G Robinson, also full supporting programme, shown 11-13 April 1940. Earlier in the week the film had been Max Miller in 'The Good Old Days', an appropriate end for Nelson's first purpose-built cinema.

The *Leader* for 27 September 1940 announced new cinema prices from 7 October following increases including the new tax. 4d seats to 6d; 6d seats to 8d; 7d to 9d; 9d to 10d; 1/- to 1/2d; 1/6 to 1/9d. It was signed on behalf of the **Palace**, **Grand**, **Queen's** and **Alhambra** by H Hartley, for the **Majestic** and **Capitol** by Arthur Peel, and for the **Regent** by R H Hartley.

The *Nelson Leader* of 4 October 1940 had an account of a talkie film show at Salem Church the previous Sunday: 'Key to Scotland', 'Whipsnade Zoo', 'The Highway Code', 'Seven Men of Preston' (the story of the Temperance Movement). The **Salem Church Cinema** became a regular thing for a time. The other cinemas were still closed on Sundays except once a year for Cinema Sunday. The building used at Salem was not the one used for silent films earlier.

Nelson was a safe area during the second world war and evacuees came to the town from cities, mainly Manchester. In case the advertised film failed to arrive due to wartime difficulties, Nelson cinemas kept a film in reserve. It was 'The Spy in Black', a Gaumont British film starring Conrad Veldt and Valerie Hobson. Many famous music-hall stars appeared at the **Palace** during the war years with more live shows although films remained the main fare.

In the *Nelson Leader* of 14 March 1941 there was an article: *Sunday Opening of Theatres - Nelson. Wesleyans Protest.* The strong Nonconformist element in Nelson was to keep cinemas closed on Sundays for many years to come.

The **Grand** had shown British Movietone News at the beginning of 1941 but changed to Pathé Super Gazette in March. The **Majestic** had Gaumont British

News. The **Capitol** had Universal News in October 1941, and the **Grand** changed again to Paramount British News.

In March 1942 the **Regent** advertised: *Don't delay - Join the Regent Cinema Savings Group.* In May 1942 cinema prices were again revised: **Majestic**—10d, 1/3d, 1/6d, 2/-, reserved 1/-, 1/6d, 1/10d, 2/-; **Palace**, **Grand** and **Queens**—10d, 1/3d, 1/6d, reserved 1/6d, 1/10d; **Capitol**—7d, 10d,1/3d, reserved 1/-, 1/6d; **Alhambra**—7d, 10d, reserved 10d, 1/-.

Pathé Gazette was shown at the **Regent** in 1942.

When 'Mrs.Miniver' was shown at the **Majestic** for the week commencing 18 January 1943, there were special times and matinées daily except Friday. There were separate houses Monday to Friday at 6.10pm and 8.30pm, and on Saturday at 2.15pm, 6pm and 8.20pm. It was advertised as 'by public demand'.

Seats bookable for all performances. Not continuous this week. Be in your seats at starting times, please.

In March 1943 the **Grand** changed to Pathé Gazette again.

The **Queen's** showed 'The Great Waltz' in July 1944, also Pathé Super Gazette. The **Capitol** showed 'Woman in Bondage' for six days in December 1944. Later the same month the **Alhambra** showed 'Fanny by Gaslight' for six days. Both cinemas usually changed mid week.

The Prisoners of War Relatives Association had a Grand Cinema Show at the **Regent Cinema** for children of prisoners of war from Nelson on 6 January 1945. 'The White Cliffs of Dover' was shown at both the **Queen's** and the **Grand** for the week commencing 5 March 1945. For the week commencing 19 March the **Queen's** showed 'Mr. Emmanuel' Monday - Wednesday and changed to '20 Million Sweethearts' for Thursday - Saturday. The **Capitol** showed 'The Way Ahead' for a full week commencing 9 April. 'The Song of Bernadette' had been shown the same week at the **Grand** and **Queen's** in January that year with special times. On Sunday 18 March 1945 there was a Co-op. Lantern Lecture at the **Queen's**, 'Sweet Lancaster and York'. The **Regent**, week commencing 7 May: *Pathé Gazette depicting German war atrocities. Everyone over 14 years of age should see this.*

There was a Sunday concert at the **Palace** on 7 October: *Gems of Grand Opera with the Principals of Sadlers Wells.* The **Capitol** closed for alterations, decorations, etc., for the week commencing 12 November 1945, re-opening 19 November with 'Guest in the House' (Monday - Wednesday). On 24 November Mr.Hartley (of the **Regent**) gave a lecture on 'The Cinema Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow' at Woodlands Road Baptist Sunday School. There were no live shows at the **Palace** in 1945 except for Sunday concerts.

1946

There was a Sunday concert at the **Grand** on 17 February 1946: *Another great Sadlers Wells Triumph. Janet Hamilton Smith, Edith Coates, Arthur Servent and John Hargreaves. (*The last named artiste came from Colne.)

Palace 25 May, Ballet matinée by Loreto School. **Queen's**, Sunday 29 September, Harry Pollitt (Communist Party general secretary) supported by Bessie Dickinson (a local Communist). There was an extra big advert with pictures for 'The Wicked Lady' at the **Capitol,** shown throughout the week commencing 23 September.

Grand, Sunday 6 October, concert by Nelson Excelsior Glee Union. There was a charity concert at the **Regent** the same Sunday by Syd Sewell's band. 'The Corn is Green' was shown all week at the **Capitol** from 21 October.

Pathé News was shown at the **Queen's** and **Grand** in 1946.

Palace, week commencing 11 November, 'The Last of the Mohicans' and 'exclusive' film of the Mills v Baksi fight. The only stage show at the **Palace** in 1946 was 'Rose Marie', given by St. John's Operatic Society.

1947

The **Alhambra** showed Stewart Granger in 'Caravan' for a full week commencing 6 January 1947: *This is an English picture and we are proud of it.*

Palace, Sunday 19 January: Frank Binns and his Broadcasting Band along with the Crescent Singers (presented by John Wilkinson, M & N, Ltd.) Week commencing 20 January, 'Dick Whittington' (pantomime) with Hatton and Manners.

The **Capitol** had a big advertisement and a new name block for the week commencing 10 February when the film to be shown all week was 'The Lisbon Story'. There was also an alteration in times, continuous Monday - Friday from 6.15pm, matinée Tuesday 2.15pm, Saturday 2.15pm, 6pm and 8.15pm. There was another big advertisement for the following week but the programme changed on Thursday. The **Regent** special children's matinée at 4pm on Saturday 5 February included 'Black Arrow' (serial), a western, and 'Three Stooges'.On Sunday 2 March the Nelson Military Band gave a concert at the **Palace**. Sunday, 16 March, Co-op. lantern lecture, 'The Charm of the English Lake District' at the **Queen's**. **Majestic**, Sunday 20 April, lecture film show, 'Hong Kong Background', given by Frank Short as part of Nelson Borough Council's summer entertainment programme. Saturday 26 April, 2.30pm, dancing displays by Noyna School at the **Palace**. 25 May, I L P meeting at the Weavers' Institute, 'Sunday Cinemas for Nelson?' Capitol, week commencing 19 May: *'Scarface'. Strictly adults only. No person under 16 admitted. Special programme Saturday afternoon, Tex Ritter in 'Hitting the Trail'.*

The **Capitol** showed 'Spellbound' for a full week commencing 2 June and 'The Strange Mr.Gregory' all the following week. The **Alhambra** had 'The Magic Bow' for a full week commencing 9 June. **Capitol**, 7 July and week:

> *'The Jolson Story'. See this picture at its best on our new screen. Saturday matinée special programme for children: cowboy picture, last episode of serial. Next week our new serial starts. Episode 1 'Adventures of Tarzan'. Episode 1, 'Hidden Treasure'.*

Regent: Saturday matinée, two serials, two comedies, and Sandy Powell in 'I've got a horse'. The **Alhambra** showed 'Great Expectations' for a full week commencing 15 September. There was a celebrity concert at the **Palace** on Sunday, 28 September, with Nelson Arion Glee Union and three soloists. **Queen's**, Sunday 5 October, Co-op. lantern lecture, 'Holidays in Belgium'. **Regent**, Sunday 5 October, charity concert for Holy Saviour's Church, Syd Sewell and his band, and Pat Devine. **Palace**, week commencing 20 October, St.John's Operatic Society in 'The Vagabond King'. **Palace**, Sunday 26 October, Billy Butler and his concert and dance orchestra (Nelson winter entertainments).

Cinema Sunday was on 2 November; the **Regent**, **Majestic**, **Capitol**, **Grand** and **Queen's** took part in 1947. This had been by now an annual event for many years. A Sunday concert was held the following week at the **Palace** for the British Legion, featuring Syd Sewell and the Loxham brothers. The **Majestic** had a film lecture the same Sunday, 'South Africa Today' (winter entertainments). The **Majestic** was the venue for another film lecture on 30 November, 'The Men from Down Under' (winter entertainments) On Sunday 14 December the film lecture was 'New Zealand'.

The pantomime, 'Cinderella', was staged at the **Palace** in the week beginning 29 December 1947.

1948

For the week commencing 9 February 1948 the **Capitol** had the Loxham brothers, and Gladys, and Tom Merlyn as compere for a talent competition, on the stage. On the screen, 'Just William', (Monday - Wednesday) and 'Suspense' (Thursday - Saturday, twice nightly at 6pm and 8.30pm. The **Palace**, Sunday 15 February: *Musicians Union present the Vic Lewis Orchestra. Guest Artist Art Jackson prior to broadcasting on 17 February.*

Queen's, Sunday 15 February, C T C lecture, 'Under Smiling Skies'. **Capitol**, week commencing 19 February, on stage: Jean Briggs, Lancashire's 'leading juvenile soprano' and last week of talent competition, compere Tony Merlyn. On screen, 'Devil Bat's Daughter' (Monday - Wednesday), 'Behind the Mask' (Thursday - Saturday).

The **Capitol** continued with stage acts and pictures until the week beginning 22 March when it reverted to films only. There was a Sunday concert at the **Palace** on 7 March for Nelson F C. Four artistes and Les Marsden and his band (Preston). On 21 March there was an All-Irish Concert at the **Palace** for the Irish Democratic League. On Sunday 14 March Eddie McGarry and his band were at the **Palace** (winter entertainments). Geo Fisbrooke, character comedian, was on stage at the **Capitol** for the week beginning 29 March, as well as a double bill of films, changed mid week. **Majestic**, Sunday 4 April: *Cinema Entertainment (Nelson Textile Production Committee). 'The Glen is Ours', 'There's a Future In It', 'Cotton Queen', 'Modern Guide to Health'. Admission Free.*

The Lindsay School had a Dancing Matinée at the **Palace** on 24 March.

Arthur Peel was elected chairman of Barrowford U D C. He had been a councillor since November 1945.

The **Regent** had installed the latest sound system—Westrex—and had advertised it since February—*Perfect Sound by Westrex.*

Sunday 2 May, **Majestic**: *Beat the Crisis Campaign Film Show. Programme includes 'Chasing the Blues', 'Caller Herrin', 'Science Joins Industry', 'Your Very Good Health', 'Valley of Tennessee'. All seats free.*

> **Capitol** *This cinema has now been leased by the Marina Theatre Co. and will therefore be known in the future as the* ***Marina*** *Theatre. Week commencing 10 May, 'Crime over London', Margot Graham, also 'Hopalong Casidy Rides Again' (Mon, Tues, Wed), Bob Hope and Virginia Mayo in 'Princess and the Pirate' (Thurs, Frid, Sat). Special programme Saturday matinée for children.* *Nelson Leader*, 30 April 1948

Nelson had a vote on Sunday cinemas on 26 May 1948. 2,248 voted for Sunday opening and 3,605 voted against it, so Nelson cinemas remained dark on Sundays.

The *Nelson Leader* of 27 August reported a break-in at the **Regent** and goods being stolen from the kiosk. 'It Couldn't Have Happened' and 'Prisoners of the Tower' were shown at the **Marina** 9-11 September, after which it became the **Capitol** again:

> *What is it? It's a play full of fun. To the Capitol it will come. A full week it will run. It's a Walverden production. It's 'See How They Run'. Commencing 27 September.*
> *Capitol Theatre. Under entirely new management. Week commencing 13 September, Johnny Duncan, Sylvia Stanton in 'Teen Age', also 'Balloon Goes Up' (Mon, Tues, Wed). Russell Hopton, Lola Lane, in 'Death from a Distance' also 'Mind Your Step' (Thurs, Fri, Sat).*
> *Nelson Leader,* 10 September 1948

Palace, Sunday 3 October, Radio Revellers (J.Wilkinson, M.N. Welfare Club). **Grand**, week commencing 4 October, 'Mrs. Miniver', Pathé Super News. **Regent**, Sunday 10 October, Grand Charity Concert, for Holy Saviour's Church, Pat Devine, Loxham brothers & Gladys. **Capitol**, week commencing 11 October, all week, Eleanor King, Richard Gordon, in 'The Birth of a Baby': *No person under 16 admitted. This will be strictly enforced. 6.15pm, 8.30pm. Special programme Saturday matinée.*

Alhambra children's matinée prices, 3d. and 6d. Cinema Sunday, 7 November, at the **Grand**, **Regent** and **Majestic**. **Queen's**, Sunday 14 November, CTC lantern Lecture, 'Where Loveliness Lingers'.

***Palace**, Sunday 5 December, M.U. present Band Parade of 1948: The Skyliners Dance Band with Celia Leigh (vocalist); Les Askew and the M U Dance Band with George Buckley and N & K Halsted. Guest artiste Art Jackson, B B C Stalls and Circle 2/6d, Pit 1/6d.*

1949

***Palace**, Sunday 2 January 1949: Benefit Concert for Jackie Greenwood, Champion Trumpeter 1938—1939—1940. J.Hicks Empress Band (Burnley), A Houghton's Romany Band (Nelson).*

Week commencing 3 January 1949 - **Majestic**, 'Dick Barton Special Agent'; **Grand**, 'Forever Amber'; **Queen's**, 'The 39 Steps'. **Queen's**, Sunday 9 January, C.T.C. lantern lecture, 'Blue Skies and Good Companions'.

Majestic, week commencing 17 January 1949, Frank Randle, Tessie O'Shea and Josef Locke in 'Holidays with Pay', *The comedy of the season, breaking all records.* Cinema Sunday, 5 February at **Majestic** and **Regent**. **Palace**, week commencing 6 February, 'Snake Pit', adults only. **Capitol**, week commencing 13 February, The Young Vic Players in 'Harry of England', a dramatic selection from 'Henry IV' and 'Henry V', by Shakespeare, and 'The Anniversary', a one-act farce by Chekhov.

Palace, Sunday 20 March, concert by Eddie McGarry and his Broadcasting Band (Nelson Winter Entertainments). Matinée of Dancing at the **Palace**, Lindsay School, 7 May. Regent, 12 - 14 May, 'Dangerous Moonlight' by request.

Councillor Arthur Peel was re-elected chairman of Barrowford U D C in May.

Empire Productions of London shot part of a film about Lancashire in Nelson in September, featuring St.Mary's Church, Marsden Park and the Mayor's Lamp.

Palace, Sunday 16 October, Eddie McGarry and his Broadcasting Band (Nelson Winter Entertainments). **Capitol**, week commencing 31 October, Monday and Tuesday, the Revellers Concert Party (complete change of programme on Tuesday), Wednesday - Saturday, 'The Devil a Saint', Brierfield Dramatic Society (Nelson Winter Entertainments). **Capitol**, week commencing 7 November, Monday and Tuesday, the Cheerio Concert Party, Wednesday - Saturday 'The Day is Gone', Walverden Players 2/-, 1/6d, 1/-, (Nelson Winter Entertainments).

***Capitol**, week commencing 26 December, all week, Reg. M. Brook (by arrangement with B M Woolley) presents Grand Yuletide Pantomime, 'Jack and Jill'* (no artistes mentioned). *2/- and 1/6d circle, stalls 2/6. and 1/6d. Children 1/- circle and stalls. Twice nightly, 6.15pm and 8.15pm. Matinées daily at 2.15pm. Next week, 'Babes in the Wood' presented by Hylda Baker. Billy Knight as Simple Simon, Cyril Hatton as Dame Martha, Lois Bard as Robin Hood. Prices same except children half price at matinées only.*

Palace, Sunday 15 January 1950, Julian L. Niman and his Screen and Radio Orchestra (Nelson Winter Entertainments).

1950

In the *Nelson Leader* of 13 January 1950: ***Capitol**, Manager Frank Neale, assistant manager T.Gamble. Week commencing 16 January, Bud Abbot and Lou Costello in 'Lost in a Harem' (Mon, Tues, Wed), Jeanette McDonald in 'Birds and the Bees', also 'Sure Cures' and 'Bikini, the Atom Island' (Thur, Fri, Sat).*

Majestic, week commencing 16 January, George Raft, Sylvia Sydner in 'Mr. Ace', also Laurel and Hardy in 'Helpmates' (Monday - Wednesday), 'Captain Kidd' Charles Laughton, and Laurel and Hardy in 'Music Box' (Thursday - Saturday), a rare mid-week change at the **Majestic**. **Palace**, Sunday 22 January, New Oxford Light Orchestra (Nelson Winter Entertainments). **Capitol**, Tuesday-Saturday, 31 January - 4 February, Nelson Municipal Junior Dramatic Society in 'She Passed Through Lorraine' (Library and Arts Committee), Tuesday 7 January and week, Civic Theatre Guild in 'Arms and the Man' (Library and Arts Committee) at the **Capitol**.

Majestic, Sunday 8 January, Bernard Newman 'Spies in Fact and Fiction' (Nelson Winter Entertainments). **Palace**, Sunday 19 February, Black Dyke Mills Band (Nelson Borough). **Capitol**, week commencing Tuesday 21 February, Walverden Players in 'Miranda'. **Majestic**, Sunday 26 February, L. Du Garde Peach, 'A Playwright Explains' 1/6d., 9d., 6d. (Nelson Winter Entertainments). **Palace**, Sunday 5 March, concert by Tommy Whiteford Orchestra (Nelson Winter Entertainments). **Palace**, 19 March, Nelson and District Municipal Choir (Nelson Winter Entertainments). **Palace**, Sunday 26 March, Josef Locke, Lew Agnew Orchestra.

New Capitol Cinema, manager Leonard Bass, week commencing 24 July 1950, double feature programme, Dorothy Lamour in 'Lucky Stiff' and Burgess Meredith and Paulette Goddard in 'A Yankee Comes Back' (Monday - Wednesday), Virginia Bruce in 'The Invisible Woman' and Gloria Jean in 'Wake Up and Dream' (Thursday - Saturday). continuous daily from 6.15, special children's matinée, Saturday at 2.15pm:

> *Under new management. This theatre is now under the personal direction of Mr. Leonard Bass, a showman of long standing. No expense will be spared to give patrons of the **Capitol** everything of the best. All the latest and most up-to-date super productions procurable will be presented at the **Capitol**. Our motto henceforth is 'Comfort, Civility, Courtesy'. Business will continue as usual during renovations and decorations. Visit the **Capitol** Cinema for capital entertainment. The House of Super Pictures.*

As the **New Capitol** the cinema acquired a doorman in a smart green uniform. Double bills were a regular feature. Serials were shown as support at the **Alhambra**, Thursday - Saturday, 'Jungle Gold', and at the **Regent**, Thursday and Friday, 'Captain Marvel'. Double bills were dropped at the **New Capitol** in September for a main feature and 'full supporting programme'.

In the *Nelson Leader* of 8 September 1951 was an announcement by the **Palace**, **Grand**, **Majestic**, **Regent** and **Queen's** cinemas: *On and after 11 September prices of admission to stalls and circle at the above cinemas will be: stalls 1/6d (inc. 6½d tax), reserved 1/10d (inc. 9d tax), circle 2/- (inc. 10½d tax), dress circle 2/9d (inc 1/1d tax). No booking fee.* This was because of the British Film Production levy.

There was a big advertisement with pictures of films for the **New Capitol** for the week commencing 18 September:

*'They Live by Night' and 'Loonies on Broadway' (Mon, Tues, Wed), 'The Spiral Staircase' and 'Fun and Fancy Free' (Thurs, Fri, Sat). Have you been to the **New Capitol** recently? Thousands of patrons, old and new, have expressed surprise and pleasure at the great transformation. It must be seen to be believed.*

Palace, Sunday 1 October, Bill Gregson and his band (Winter entertainments).

There was a letter of complaint in the *Nelson Leader* on 22 September about shabby local cinemas and short programmes. In the same paper the **New Capitol** advertised:

*'Joan of Arc' (Mon, Tues, Wed), 'Race Street' also 'Hills of Donegal' (Thurs, Fri, Sat). Our heating apparatus has now been tested with great success. Patrons of the **New Capitol** are now assured of warmth and comfort in cold weather. This has already been experienced by thousands of patrons. Your comfort and pleasure is our main consideration.*

Pathé Super News was advertised at the **Grand** for the week commencing 9 October. The following week it advertised the British Movietone News.

The *Nelson Leader* of 27 October had a letter of appreciation of the **New Capitol** from a patron. It was an advertisement.

Queen's: Sunday, 12 November, Lantern lecture (Cyclists' Touring Club) 'Tyrolean Tour'. **Palace**, Sunday 12 November, Lew Askew orchestra (Winter entertainments).

'Let's go to the Pictures' advertisement in the *Nelson Leader* 17 November: ***New Capitol**. Let's go to the Pictures - but let's make it the **New Capitol**.*

Week commencing 4 December: *'The Best Years of our Lives', Frederic March. Due to enormous length of film, programme will start at 5pm.* (182 minutes long according to *Halliwell's Film Guide*), *(Mon, Tue, Wed), 'Enchantment', David Niven, (Thurs, Fri, Sat).*

The **New Capitol** had a benefit week for Nelson Football Club in the week commencing 18 December. The films shown were Lon Cheney in 'Of Mice and Men', the picture Hollywood said could never be made, Monday - Wednesday and Frank Randle in 'Somewhere in Camp' Thursday - Saturday.

Palace, Sunday 17 December, Nelson and District Municipal Junior Choir, conductor Pat Devine, Grand Carol Concert.

New Capitol:

*A Happy Xmas and a **Capitol New** Year from management and staff. Let your New Year resolution be made now - become a regular patron of the **New Capitol** Cinema where you receive 100% entertainment at moderate prices. Be wise, follow the crowds to the **New Capitol** Cinema, Nelson's most modern luxurious cinema.*

1951

Nelson Leader, 5 January 1951: *'A Family Affair'. This film concerns you. See it in the supporting programme at Nelson cinemas next week. Issued by Lancashire County Council's Children's Dept.*

Week commencing 8 January 1951: **Majestic** 'The Cure for Love', Robert Donat, Gaumont British News. **Palace**, Richard Widmark 'Night and the City'. **Grand**, 'On the Town', Gene Kelly, British Movietone News. **Queen's**, Albert Modley, 'Up for the Cup' also 'For You I Die'.

New Capitol, week commencing 12 January: *First time in Nelson, 'The Dark Past', William Holden, also 'Manhattan Angel' (Mon, Tues, Wed). First time in*

Nelson

Nelson, 'We were strangers', Jennifer Jones, also 'The Immigrant' Charlie Chaplin, (Thurs, Fri, Sat).

Palace, Sunday 21 January, The Astorians directed by James Heyworth (Winter entertainments). **Regent**, Sunday 21 January, **Grand** Charity Concert for Holy Saviour's, Pat Devine, Herman Eccles, etc. **Majestic**, *Nelson Leader*, 26 January: *Bring all the family to the pictures, 'Happiest Days of your Lives', also 'Brumas Steals the Show'.*

The **Grand** advertised 'Let's Go to the Pictures', 'Duchess of Idaho', Movietone News. **Queen's**, 'Young Men of Music', latest news and pictures. **New Capitol**, Monday-Wednesday, double feature, 'Tarzan's Magic Fountain', Lex Barker, also 'Make Mine Laughs', Thursday - Saturday, first time in Nelson, Barbara Stanwyck , 'The Furies'.

The **New Capitol** tried very hard to attract patrons at this time:

> ***New Capitol**, con. from 5.45pm., Sat from 2pm, The Management of this cinema beg to announce that as from Monday next, February 19, all Old Age Pensioners will be granted a special concession and will be admitted any evening up to 6pm for the price of 7d., with the exception of Saturday night but including Saturday up to 3.30pm. 'That Midnight Kiss' (Mon, Tues, Wed), 'Holiday Affair' also 'Variety Time', (Thurs, Fri, Sat).*
>
> *Nelson Leader*, 16 February 1951

Palace, Sunday 18 February, Eddy McGarry's band (Winter entertainments).

The **Regent** closed from Monday 18 June for decorations and renovations, re-opening Monday 2 July when *once again you will say 'Let's go to the **Regent**'.* It re-opened with Dan Dailey and Anne Baxter in 'A Ticket to Tomahawk' also 'Everybody's Baby' (Monday - Wednesday), Ronald Colman in 'Prisoner of Zenda' also 'Brumas Steals the Show' (Thursday - Saturday). The **New Capitol** showed 'So Dear to my Heart' all week *First time in Nelson and exclusive to the **New Capitol***

Also Shirley Temple in 'Two Men and a Girl'. **Grand**, week commencing 16 July, Clifton Webb, 'For Heaven's Sake'. British Paramount News.

The Nelson Leader of 3 August 1951 announced an increase in entertainment tax and film levy: ***Palace**, **Grand**, **Queen's**, 1/-, 1/9d, (2/1d res), **Majestic**, 3/- dress circle, **Regent**, pit 7d and 1/-, (res 1/3d), stalls 1/9d (res 2/1d) circle 2/3d (res 2/7d), **Alhambra**, stalls 9d, child 6d, circle 1/-, child 9d. No extra for booking.*

The **Capitol** dropped the '**New**' when advertising for the week commencing 29 October 1951: *For adults only, 'The Monster Maker' (H), also Gene Autry in 'Big Sombrero' (Mon, Tues, Wed) Bela Logosi in 'Return of the Ape Man', also Gene Autry in 'The Cowboy and the Indians' (Thurs, Fri, Sat).*

Majestic, week commencing 5 November, 'Three Little Words', Fred Astaire 'Glimpses of Old England' and Pathé Newsreel (instead of Gaumont British News).

> *Calling All Children! Here is an important announcement. Commencing Saturday 10 November there will be a special children's matinée every Saturday morning at 10am and Saturday afternoon at 2pm. A special programme will be provided which will include a new serial entitled 'Batman and Robin' (the boy wonder) and a Walt Disney cartoon. A real puppet show will be presented by P C Cortman (National Safety First Officer, Burnley Division) at the cinema 10 November at 10am and 2pm, in addition to the film programme. Parents send your children. We will take care of them. Admission 5d and 7d. **Capitol**.*
>
> *Nelson Leader*, 2 November 1951:

The **Alhambra** matinée prices were still 3d and 6d. The **Capitol** advertised as the **New Capitol** again on 14 December 1951. Paramount News was still shown at the **Grand** and Pathé News at the **Majestic**.

1952

Week commencing 4 January 1952, **Palace**, 'Rommel - Desert Fox'; **Grand**, 'Tale of Five Cities'; **Queen's**, 'He Stayed for Breakfast' also 'This Girl is Mine'; **Majestic**, 'Father's Little Dividend'; **Capitol** (without the New), 'He's a Cockeyed Wonder' also 'Hoe Down' (Monday - Wednesday), 'Gasolene Alley', also Gene Autry in 'Heart of Rio Grande' (Thursday - Saturday). It was **New Capitol** again on 11 February. **Regent**, Sunday 27 January, special cinema performance for Holy Saviour's, Margaret Lockwood in 'I'll be your Sweetheart', also 'Love Story', Margaret Lockwood. Albert Street Co-operative Hall had a film show the same Sunday for Pennine Range Motor Club, of motor racing films.

***New Capitol**, week comencing 4 February. The Armetus boys in 'Nothing Venture', also Charlie Chaplin in 'Chase Me Charlie' (Mon, Tues, Wed), 'Sarong Girls' also 'Holiday Rhythm'. On stage 3 days only, personal appearance of the wonder child mimic, Little Margaret Luke, direct from her successful performance in 'Welsh Rarebit' at Blackpool. She's terrific! Please note Margaret Luke will be appearing Thurs, Fri and Sat only and not all week as previously advertised.*

The following week the **New Capitol** showed 'Clochemerle', *the most staggering film ever made. Adults only. Also 'Square Dance Jubilee'. Free list entirely suspended. (Mon, Tues, Wed). For Thurs, Fri and Sat, by special request, 'The Jolson Story'.*

The *Nelson Leader* of 14 March 1952: *Youngest cinema goer heads the queue.* [picture] *Roughly half of the thousands of kiddies who have joined the Children's Matinée Club at the **Regent** attended last Saturday to receive membership badges and certificates, and the remainder will do so tomorrow. R. Hartley, manager, seen presenting tokens to youngest member, two-year old Carole Anderson who headed queue.*

Palace, week commencing 31 March, Cecil Bateson Memorial Festival Week (amateur dramatics). Cecil H Bateson had been a leading amateur musician: at one time the conductor of Colne Orchestral Society, Burnley Orchestral Society, also associated with the Nelson Arion Glee Union and the Nelson Glee and Madrigal Society. After his death in May 1945 a memorial fund was established and an annual festival was founded in his name.

Queen's, week commencing 7 April, 'The Tall Target' also special attraction, 'The Royal Funeral'. The **Grand** had changed newsreels again from 11 February from Paramount to Universal News. **Queen's**, week commencing 28 April, grand double feature, 'Calling Bulldog Drummond', Walter Pigeon, also 'The Painted Hills', Lassie (An unusual picture advert for the **Queen's**).

Nelson Leader 2 May 1952, letter of complaint about cinemas: usherettes were criticised as 'indifferent', with little concern whether the patrons sat on the stairs or fell over the gallery! The writer referred to bad light, poor sound control, scratchy records and the house lights being left on while films were screened. There was a reply the following week from an usherette giving their side. She said that patrons would put their tickets into their mouths whilst pocketing their change and then hand the usherette the wet ticket; they would take an end seat and then grumble about having to stand up for others to pass along the row; they would take off their coats whilst handing tickets to the usherette and come close to giving her a black eye, and on a wet night they would shake their umbrellas over the usherette.

The Church of Christ, Southfield Street (former Royal Cinema) was registered for marriages on 13 August 1952. The **Grand** had Universal News up to

the first week in September, then changed again to British Movietone News. **New Capitol**: *Sunday, 5 October, special benefit film show in aid of Mr. Pickles and family of Seldon Street, who lost their home through fire. Fred Astaire in 'Second Chorus', also Brenda Joyce in 'Shaggy'. Commence 7pm. Usual admission prices.*

Palace, Sunday 19 October, Bill Gallacher (chairman of Communist Party). **Grand**, week commencing 20 October, 'The Quiet Man', British Movietone News. **Queen's** week commencing 10 November, 'Lydia Bailey', full all-star programme includes interest, comedy and another of the famous 'Spotlight' series. **Palace**, week commencing 17 November, 'Annie Get your Gun', St.John's Operatic Society.

Nelson Leader, 5 December 1952, letter of complaint about paying 2/3d for a film show that began at 7.20pm and was over by 9.20pm. The writer claimed that there were three-hour shows in other towns.

1953

Majestic, week commencing 5 January 1953, Walt Disney's 'Robin Hood'. **New Capitol**, week commencing 12 January, Frank Randle, 'Somewhere in Politics' and full supporting programme, (Monday - Wednesday), 'Valentino', Eleanor Parker and Anthony Dexter, also full supporting programme (Thursday - Saturday), continuous from 5.45pm. **Regent**, Sunday 25 January, 'Dear Octopus', Margaret Lockwood, also 'The Lamp Still Burns', proceeds for Holy Saviour's Church.

The **New Capitol** dropped its Saturday morning matinée after 24 January but continued with a 2pm matinée.

Queen's, week commencing 9 February, Monday - Wednesday and Saturday, Maureen O'Hara in 'Kangaroo', also Kent Taylor in 'Girl in 313', Thursday and Friday only, 'Drums for a Holiday', commentary by Leo Genn, and 'The Bourneville Story', commentary by Richard Attenborough. Tickets from grocers, confectioners, presented by Cadbury Bros. Ltd. Admission free, Continuous 1.45pm to 5pm and 6.30pm to 10.15pm.

Majestic, Sunday 15 February, proceeds for Mayor of Nelson's Flood Relief fund, 'That Midnight Kiss', Mario Lanza, usual prices, 7.30pm. The Fund had been established to give help to people living near the east coast after the disastrous flooding there.

Queen's, week commencing 23 February, 'The Savage', Charlton Heston, full supporting programme, includes news and comedy items. **Regent**, Sunday 1 March at 7.15pm, 'Dancing Years' also 'County Fair', all proceeds for Mayor of Nelson's Flood Distress Fund. **Majestic**, week commencing 9 March, 'The Thing', for adults only, no children allowed next week under any circumstances. The same week the **New Capitol** had a film for adults only, Monday - Wednesday, 'The Well', also 'Return Fare to Laughter'. The **Grand** showed 'The Merry Widow' and British Movietone News.

New Capitol, Children's matinée programme, 21 March 1953, Disney cartoon, 'Pests of the West', 'Stage Coach Kid', final episode of 'White Eagle', first episode of 'Batman - the Electric Brain', first episode 'Brick Bradford - Atom Defence'. The **Grand** showed Movietone News in the week commencing 6 April and the following week it was Paramount British News again.

Palace, week commencing 20 April, Cecil Bateson Memorial Festival. **Palace**, Sunday 17 May, Boyd Neal Orchestra, leader Granville Jones, conductor Boyd Neal. **New Capitol**, week commencing 18 May, all week, 'Rainbow Round My Shoulder', Frankie Lane, also 'Frontier Outpost'.

The **Grand** showed a special Coronation Newsreel from Monday - Wednesday, 8 - 10 June 1953. For the week commencing 15 June the **Grand** showed 'A Queen is Crowned'. The **Majestic** showed 'Elizabeth is Queen' the same

week. The **Palace** also showed 'A Queen is Crowned' with 'Double Crossbones' as a second feature. 'No Room for the Groom' was shown with it at the **Grand**. The free list was entirely suspended.

Free film shows during the Nelson holidays. On Thursday 16 July a mobile cinema will give three free film shows at Albert Street, Marsden Park Pool, and the corner of Railway Street and Chapel Street. Cartoon, Comedy, Information. Nelson Co-operative Society.

Grand, week commencing 31 August, 'Everything I have is Yours'. On the same programme: *The screen truly comes alive in full dimension. MGM presents Metroscopix 3 Dimension, 'Three Dimensional Murder'.*

Regent, Saturday 7 August and afterwards, Special 'Roy Rogers Riders Club', 2.15pm. Electron Film Club winter season begins Sunday 20 September. **Grand**, week commencing 19 October: *Once again in response to requests, 'The Quiet Man'.* **Palace**, week commencing 16 November, 'Wild Violets', St. John's Operatic Society. Same week, **Majestic**, 'One Minute to Zero', Pathé Newsreel. **Grand**, 'Salome', Gaumont British News. The **Grand** had changed from Paramount News to Gaumont British News from 2 November. **Regent**, week commencing 7 December, 'It Started in Paradise', also 'The Lawless Breed', Monday - Wednesday, 'Venetian Bird' also 'Big Top' Thursday - Saturday. *See and enjoy all these films on the latest type of silver screen.* Week commencing 28 December, **Majestic** 'Peter Pan', also 'Nature's Half Acre'; **Grand**, 'Genevieve', Gaumont British News; **Queen's**, 'Jack and the Beanstalk', Abbot and Costello, also 'Rivers End'. **Regent**, 'Aladdin and his Lamp' also Bowery boys in 'Feudin' Fools' (Monday - Wednesday), 'Woman of the North Country' also 'Secrets of Monte Carlo' (Thursday - Saturday).

1954

Week commencing 1 January 1954, **Majestic**, 'Hans Christian Anderson'; **Palace**, 'The Saint's Return', also 'Stronghold'; **Grand**, 'Roman Holiday', Gaumont British News; **Queen's**, 'The Great Game', Diana Dors, also 'He Done her Wrong', Buster Keaton; **New Capitol**, adults only, 'Women of Twilight', children under 16 not admitted (Mon, Tues, Wed), Anthony Dexter in 'The Brigand', (Thurs, Fri, Sat); **Regent**, 'Scarlet Angel', also 'Adam and Eveline' (Mon, Tues, Wed), 'Return of the Corsican Brothers'. also 'Tomahawk Trail' (Thurs, Fri, Sat): *Pictures are better seen on the silver screen.* **Alhambra**, 'Distant Drums' and full supporting programme (Monday - Wednesday), 'I'll See you in my Dreams', also full supporting programme, (Thursday - Saturday).

Regent, Sunday 24 January, Nelson Eddy in 'Phantom of the Opera', also 'Keep 'em Flying', Abbot and Costello. All proceeds for Holy Saviour's Church. **Alhambra**, matinées, Saturday, 2.15pm, special matinée Saturday 16 January, Jane Wyman in 'Cheyenne', a Western thriller; **Grand**, week commencing 8 February, 'Background', also 'The Royal Visit to Tonga' (*exclusive to this theatre).* Week commencing 22 February, **Majestic**, 'The Conquest of Everest' *This is the film you have been waiting for.* **Palace**, 'The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms', *positively adults only, Cert X.* **New Capitol**, week commencing 22 March, 'The First Time', also Gene Autry and Champion in 'Winning the West' (Monday to Wednesday), Odette Joyeux in 'Passionelle' (English sub-titles) also Laurel and Hardy in 'Perfect Day', adults only. Foreign language films were rare in Nelson cinemas. **Grand**, week commencing 24 May, 'Trouble in Store', Gaumont British News; **Queen's**, week commencing 31 May, 'Rio Rita', Abbot and Costello; **Majestic**, week commencing 7 June, 'It's a Grand Life', Frank Randle.

Week commencing 26 July, **Majestic**, 'Laughing Anne', Pathé News Reel; **Grand**, 'Julius Caesar', British Movietone News.

Nelson

On 31 July 1954, Herbert Hartley died. Two days before his death he had watched 'Julius Caesar' at the **Grand** for an hour. He then went into the cinema office and in the presence of the manager, T Ainsworth, recited Mark Anthony's oration to the Romans. He owned cinemas in Nelson, Burnley, Todmorden and Oldham. **Nelson Grand** was his favourite cinema. The funeral cortege made a detour to pass the **Grand** for this reason. His two sons, Stanley and Clifford, carried on the business of Hartley Cinemas Ltd.

The *Nelson Leader* of 8 October 1954 reported that the **Capitol** Cinema was up for sale because of the proprietor's ill-health. It was owned by a woman in Leeds. The 427-seat cinema-theatre would be sold by auction. The Nelson Borough Council have 'noted' a letter from the estate agents asking if they are interested.

New Capitol, week commencing 11 October, 'The Red Ball Express', also 'The Titchfield Thunderbolt', (Monday - Wednesday), 'Sabre Jet', also 'Another Fine Mess', (Thursday - Saturday); **Grand**, week commencing 25 October, 'Elephant Walk', Elizabeth Taylor. *See it on the latest panoramic screen. This is the newest type of wide screen, has been specially installed to accommodate latest release films in Cinemascope and Vistavision. In the very near future. See it at the Grand and note the difference.*

Majestic, week commencing 1 November, 'Appointment in Honduras', Pathé News, *Look out for new panoramic wide screen*; **Palace**, week commencing 15 November, 'Brigadoon', St.John's Operatic Society.

Nelson Leader 10 December 1954. *Sunday Cinema screened a Horror Film. British-Polish Friendship Society film show at Weavers Institute. U N O 'The Last Stage', a Polish film abour Auschwitz.*

Nelson Leader, 17 December 1954, letter advocating Sunday cinemas in Nelson. In the same paper, Cinema screen of the future. Picture of **Regent** old screen and cinemascope new screen: *The new screen is two and a half times wider than the customary size, and this together with the use of revolutionary new projection equipment achieves the illusion of depth without the wearing of special glasses. Westrex sound. The most important event in local cinema history - Mr Hartley, manager.*

Majestic, week commencing 20 December, 'Killing from Space' also 'Tembo'. *See your films to perfection on our wide panoramic screen.* In the week commencing 27 December, CinemaScope came to Nelson. The **Regent** showed 'The Robe' all week and the **Grand** showed 'Rose Marie'. It was 6pm and 8pm at the **Regent** with matinées daily except Friday. 'The Robe' was held over for a second full week at the **Regent**. The **Grand** presented 'Valley of the Kings' the following week and went back to Paramount.

The **New Capitol**, week commencing 27 December. 'Flight Nurse' also 'Rhythm Hits the Toe', Monday - Wednesday, 'Hobson's Choice' also interest, cartoon etc. Thursday - Saturday. Children's matinée Saturday 2pm. No noticeable change since the For Sale report.

Nelson Leader, 31 December 1954, picture of children in **Palace**, kindly loaned by Hartley Cinemas Ltd., for Labour Party treat.

1955

The **Capitol** showed its last film, 'Clash by Night', with Barbara Stanwyck and Marilyn Monroe, on 3 April 1955. It then became a motor repair garage.

1956

Palace, Sunday 29 January 1956. Concert of the Year. Nelson Arion Glee. Nelson Civic Junior Choir. Nelson Glee and Madrigal Society. Nelson Excelsior

Glee. Nelson Orchestral Society. In aid of Gawthorpe Hall appeal. Gawthorpe Hall is an Elizabethan house near Padiham, and was owned by members of the Shuttleworth family. Following the war the family left the house, partly because of open-cast coalmining nearby and partly because it was simply impractical for modern living. But Rachel Kay Shuttleworth, daughter of the first Baron Shuttleworth, returned to live in a part of the house and established the Gawthorpe Foundation to raise money to create a residential craft centre at the Hall. Later the Hall was given to the National Trust and Lancashire County Council.

Majestic, week commencing 9 January, 'A Star is Born'. cinemascope. **Grand**, week commencing 9 January, 'A Man Called Peter', cinemascope, Gaumont British News. **Regent**, Sunday, 29 January, 'How to Marry a Millionaire', cinemascope, proceeds for Holy Saviour's Church. **Palace**, 12 May, Loreto Ballet matinée. **Palace**, week commencing 16 April, Cecil Bateson Festival. **Regent**, week commencing 16 April, 'Blackboard Jungle', Metroscope X, also 'Moonfleet', cinemascope (Monday - Wednesday), 'The Last Command' also 'Death Walks by NIght' (Thursday - Saturday). Roy Rogers Riders Club, 2.15pm

Majestic, week commencing 4 June. 'Josephine and Men' (Monday - Wednesday), 'King's Rhapsody' (Thursday - Saturday). *Don't forget for three days only.* It was unusual for the **Majestic** to change mid week.

Week commencing 25 June, **Majestic**, 'Summer Madness'; **Palace**, 'Wichita', cinemascope; **Grand**, 'Court Jester', Vistavision, Gaumont British News; **Queen's** 'Seminole Uprising' and 'Not So Dusty'; **Alhambra**, 'Yellowneck' and 'Cross Channel' (Monday -Wednesday), 'The Quiet Man' (Thursday - Saturday).

Alhambra: *This cinema will be closed during the weeks commencing 2 July and 9 July for renovations. Re-opening Monday, 16 July.*

Nelson Leader, 29 June 1956.

Queen's: *Owing to alterations to the projection room, this cinema will be closed for one week only (week commencing 9 July). Re-opening 16 July.*

Nelson Leader, 6 July 1956:

The re-opening programme at the **Queen's**, Audie Murphy in 'Texas Kid, Outlaw' plus 'I cover the Underworld'. The **Alhambra** re-opened with Edward G Robinson in 'A Bullet for Joey' also Guy Maddison in 'Six Gun Decision' (Monday - Wednesday), 'Dragonfly Squadron' and 'Jungle Gents' (Thursday - Saturday).

Grand, week commencing 30 July, 'Now and Forever', Gaumont British News; week commencing 6 August, 'A Town Like Alice', Pathé Pictorial.

Queen's, week commencing 29 October, by request, 'Reach for the Sky'; week commencing 5 November, 'Genevieve' and 'Doctor in the House'. **Palace**, week commencing 12 November, 'Showboat', St. John's Operatic Society. The **Regent** matinée for Saturday 25 November is advertised as Roy Rogers Riders Club for the last time; after that it is Children's Matinée Club.

Majestic, Sunday 2 December, 'The Student Prince', for Hungarian relief fund. **Palace**, week commencing 3 December, 'Wedding in Paris', Burnley Light Opera Society. **Majestic**, week commencing 17 December, 'Snow White', also 'Bear Country'. **Regent**, week commencing 24 December (except Christmas Day), all week, 'Trapeze', cinemascope.

1957

Week commencing 7 January 1957, **Palace**, 'Onogo', cinemascope. **Grand**, 'The Proud and Profane', Vistavision. **Queen's** 'Fire Maidens from Outer Space' plus 'Superman Flies Again', **Majestic**, 'Serenade', Mario Lanza. **Regent**, 'To Catch a Thief', Vistavision (Monday - Wednesday), 'Artists and Models', Vistavision (Thursday - Saturday). **Alhambra**, 'Footsteps in the Fog' also 'Silver Clowns'

(Monday -Wednesday), 'South of Panama' also 'Ghosts in the Night' (Thursday - Saturday).

Regent, Sunday 27 January, 'Deep in My Heart', proceeds for Holy Saviour's Church. **Queen's**, week commencing 28 January 'The Mountain', Vistavision, also 'Vistavision Visits Hawaii'.

Palace, week commencing 5 April, Cecil Bateson Festival Week.

Imperial Ballroom, Nelson, 3 May 1957, 1st annual cinema ball, Ted Heath and his music. Tickets from Savoy and Hippodrome, Colne, and any Burnley cinema, but not from Nelson cinemas.

The **Alhambra** closed for good on 5 May 1957 after showing Burt Lancaster and Jody Lawrence in 'Ten Tall Men' with supporting programme. The last resident manager was John Rushton, then sixty-six. A *Nelson Leader* editorial said there would be no more 3d matinées or 9d and 1/- seats left in the town. The **Alhambra** seated 600 at the time of closure. The bath was still there under the wooden floor. It was said to have been killed by television, and became a leather goods works.

Week commencing 3 June, **Palace**, 'Love me Tender'; **Grand**, 'Birth of a Baby'; **Queen's** 'Mad at the World'; **Majestic**, 'Death of a Scoundrel'; **Regent**, 'Fire Maidens From Outer Space' and 'Superman Flies Again' (Monday - Wednesday), 'D Day the 6th of June', cinemascope.

Week commencing 5 July (Nelson holidays), **Queen's**, closed for one week only. **Majestic**, week commencing 22 July, 'The Gold Rush', Charlie Chaplin. **Grand**, week commencing 16 September, 'War and Peace'. **Regent**, week commencing 30 September, all week, 'The King and I', cinemascope. *At its best on our miracle mirror screen.*

The travelling **Century Theatre** made its first visit to Nelson and opened on Wednesday 16 October with 'The Mollusc'.

The *Nelson Leader* of 18 October 1957 had a letter about Nelson being a 'gloomville' because it had no Sunday cinema shows.

The Lancashire County Youth Orchestra gave a Sunday concert at the **Palace** on 20 October.

1958

Palace, week commencing 13 January 1958, 'Red Riding Hood' with Peter Webster and Joyce Heap's Burnley Babes. This was the first pantomime at the Palace for many years.

Regent, Sunday 26 January, 'It's Great to Be Young', also 'My Wife's Family', proceeds for Holy Saviour's Church. Palace, week commencing 24 March, Cecil Bateson Festival. Week commencing 7 April, Majestic, 'Teahouse of the August Moon'; **Queen's**, 'The Bells of St. Mary's'; **Palace**, 'Jet Pilot'; **Grand**, 'Just my Luck'; **Regent**, 'Four Girls in Town', also 'Everything but the Truth' (Monday - Wednesday), 'Smallest Show on Earth', also 'Last Stagecoach West', (Thursday - Saturday).

Majestic, week commencing 21 April, 'Gone with the Wind' in Metroscope.

Imperial ballroom, Friday 9 May, cinema ball, Syd Ashmead's Old Time Orchestra. **Majestic**, week commencing 23 June, 'Action of the Tiger' also 'House of Numbers' (Monday - Wednesday), 'The Seventh Sin' (Thursday - Saturday). This was the first of the mid-week changes at the Majestic. **Queen's**, week commencing 7 July, closed for one week only, re-opening Monday 14 July (local holidays).

Palace, week commencing 10 November, 'Summer Song', St John's Operatic Society. (The Society had been founded in 1925.) Herbert Hartley was for many years its president.

1959

Regent, Sunday 25 January 1959, 'Those Dangerous Years', also 'Small Hotel', Gordon Barker, proceeds for Holy Saviour's Church.

Imperial Ballroom, Friday 20 February, Cinema Ball, New Savona Band. **Majestic**, week commencing 16 February, 'Perri' and 'Westward Ho the Wagons', double Disney programme.

Palace, week commencing 13 April, Cecil Bateson Memorial Festival of comedy plays. **Palace**, Sunday 26 April, concert version of 'Merrie England', St. John's Operatic Society, Burnley Municipal Choir, net profit for Mayor of Nelson's Fund.

Nelson Leader 24 April 1959, letter from H Ward, manager of Burnley Empire: *Is it the death knell for hundreds of cinemas?*, failure of the Chancellor to abolish entertainment tax.

Queen's, week commencing 18 May, Norman Wisdom week, 'Trouble in Store', also 'Taza Son of Cochise' (Monday and Tuesday), 'Man of the Moment', also 'Four Guns to the Border' (Wednesday and Thursday), 'One Good Turn', also full supporting programme (Friday and Saturday).

Palace, week commencing 31 August, 'The Hound of the Baskervilles', also 'The Child and the Killer'. **Majestic**, week commencing 14 September, 'The Sign of Zorro', also 'The Light in the Forest', Disney double. **Grand**, week commencing 21 September, welcome return of 'The Robe'.

Grand, commencing 5 October for two weeks, 'The Ten Commandments'. **Palace**, week commencing 9 November, 'Carousel', St John's Operatic Society. **Regent**, week commencing 28 December, all week, 'Serious Charge'.

1960

Regent, Sunday 31 January 1960, 'Carry on Nurse' and 'The Duke wore Jeans', three hours entertainment, proceeds for Holy Saviour's Church. **Queen's**, week commencing 1 February, 'Upstairs and Downstairs', Michael Craig, Anne Haywood. **Majestic**, week commencing 9 February, 'I'm Alright Jack'.

Palace, Friday 18 March, wrestling. Rest of week pictures: Max Bygraves in 'Bobbikins', also 'The Sad Horse'.

Palace, week commencing 4 April, Cecil Bateson Festival, five three-act plays. **Regent**, week commencing 11 April, 'Jack the Ripper', also 'Wire Topper' (Monday - Wednesday), 'The Ten Commandments', Vistavision, 5/-, 3/6d, 2/6, (Thursday - Saturday). Retained all the following week.

Queen's, week commencing 23 May 1960, 'The Flying Fontaines', Michael Callon, also '12 to the Moon'.

The **Queen's** closed for good after the last show on Saturday, 28 May. Hartley Cinemas Ltd, leased the **Palace** and the **Grand** to **Star Cinemas** for 21 years. The Queen's was demolished in 1969. Lew Askew was the new manager of the Palace and the Grand for Star Cinemas.

Week commencing 30 May, **Palace**, 'The Wonderful Country', also 'Man Accused'; **Grand**, 'Babette Goes to War', also 'Dick Turpin, Highwayman'; **Majestic**, 'Two Way Stretch', also 'Two Guns and a Badge'; **Regent**, 'Up Periscope' also 'Westbound' (Monday -Wednesday), 'They Came to Cordura' (Thursday - Saturday).

In the *Nelson Leader* of 10 June 1960, the Palace and the Grand advertised for the first time as under the control of Star Cinemas, with the Star logo

Palace, week commencing 13 June, 'The Navy Lark', also 'The Oregon Trail'. **Grand**, *closing after last performance on Saturday 11 June (*'Carry On Constable' and 'The Witness') *for complete modernisation. New seating. New lighting. New decor.* **Regent**, week commencing 27 June, John Ashley and Sandra

Knight in 'Frankenstein's Daughter', also John Agar and Joyce Meadows in 'The Brain from Planet Arous', adults only, double X programme (Monday - Wednesday), Broderick Crawford, Barbara Hale in 'The Sabre and the Arrow', also 'City of Fear'. *Please note only one house Saturday evening at 7.15pm. Children's matinée Saturday at 2.15pm. Saturday evening performance of 2 July will be the last to be presented at this cinema and Mr and Mrs Hartley would like to express their thanks to the many patrons who they have come to know as friends during their long association with the Regent Theatre.*

The **Regent** became a bingo hall.

***Grand**, Nelson's new luxury cinema. See the amazing transformation. Grand re-opening Monday 27 June. Monday to Friday continuous from 6pm. Saturday continuous from 2.30pm. Matinees Tuesdays and Thursdays 2.30pm. Lili Palmer and Sylvia Sims in 'Conspiracy of Hearts', also 'New Guinea Patrol'. The **Palace** will close after last performance on Saturday 25 June for complete modernisation.* ('The Jayhawkers' and 'Date at Midnight').

***Grand** re-opening attraction Monday 4 July, 'Around the World in 80 Days'. Monday - Friday, once nightly at 7pm, Saturday continuous from 4.30pm.*

The programmes at Nelson's Star cinemas became regularly the same as was being shown at Star's Burnley cinemas. Week commencing 5 September, 'Samson and Delilah' shown at **Palace**, Nelson, **Empire**, **Burnley** and **Hippodrome**, **Colne**. 'The Scarface Mob' and 'A Lady Mislaid' at **Majestic** same week.

Imperial, Friday 16 September, cinema ball, Ernie Foster and his band. **Majestic**, week commencing 12 September, 'Life is a Circus', Crazy Gang.

From 1 July the **Majestic** had advertised as 'A Victory Theatres cinema'.

Week commencing 10 October, 'The Nudist Story' at Nelson **Palace** and **Burnley Empire**; 'Light Up the Sky' at **Burnley Palace** and Nelson **Grand**. 'The Day They Robbed the Bank of England' at the **Majestic**.

Nelson Leader, 14 October 1960, carried a letter asking, 'Why not Sunday cinemas?'

Week commencing 24 October, **Majestic**, 'The Nun's Story'; **Grand** (and **Burnley Empire**), première presentation concurrent with Manchester, 'Watch Your Stern', Kenneth Connor, Eric Barker, Leslie Phillips.

In October the **Imperial** Ballroom came under new directorship with Lew Askew as manager, as well as managing the Palace and Grand.

Monday 31 October, public meeting in the **Civic Theatre** to debate Sunday cinemas for Nelson. Peter Sagar spoke in favour of Sunday cinema opening.

The increased cost of hiring the **Palace** after Star took over led to a demand for a municipal hall for Nelson. Nelson Council had turned down the **Queen's** and the **Regent** as well as the **Capitol**. The **Civic Theatre** in Stanley Street was a former Sunday School seating only 300.

Palace, week commencing 14 November, 'The King and I', St John's Operatic Society. The same week the **Grand** showed 'Never Let Go' and 'Boyd's Shop' (Monday - Wednesday), 'Savage Innocents' and 'Day of Grace' (Thursday - Saturday).

> **Palace** and **Grand**: *We wish to apologise for it being so cold in our cinemas during the past few days, due to a new heating system being installed, which is now complete and working.*

A vote on Sunday cinemas took place on Monday 21 November. For 4,434, against 2,031, majority for 2,403. 26% poll.

Palace, week commencing 5 December, adults only, 'Suddenly Last Summer', also 'Operation Universe'. Nelson Star Junior Club every Saturday at 2pm.

*This Saturday three cartoons and a serial, 'Francis Goes to West Point'. **Majestic**, week commencing 19 December, by request, 'Seven Brides for Seven Brothers', also 'Gun Glory'. Grand, week commencing 26 December, 'Hans Christian Anderson'.*

1961

Week commencing 9 January 1961, **Palace** 'House of Wax', 3D Screamoscope, also 'Attack of the Crab Monsters' (first 3D film in Nelson). **Grand** 'Strangers When we Meet', also 'Edmundo Ros Half Hour'. **Majestic**, 'Hell is a City', also 'Seven Guns to Messa'.

Sunday film shows came to Nelson on 22 January 1961, with Tony Curtis in 'The Purple Mask' and Benny Hill in 'Who Done It' at the **Grand**. Jeff Chandler in 'Sign of the Pagan' also 'Francis in the Navy' at the **Palace**. Usual prices. The **Majestic** remained closed that Sunday, but opened on Sunday for the first time on 5 February and showed 'The Time Machine', and 'Rich, Young and Deadly' for seven days. During the same period the **Grand** showed 'Saturday NIght and Sunday Morning' concurrent with the centre of Manchester.

Grand, week commencing 13 February, for six days, 'The Three Worlds of Gulliver' in Superdynamation, also 'Seven Ways from Sundown'. **Majestic**, week commencing Sunday, 26 February, 'Psycho'. **Grand**, week commencing Monday 20 March for six days, 'Pollyanna' —

> *20 March, civic night, personal appearance of Hayley Mills, star of 'Pollyanna' who will present a cheque to Burnley, Nelson and Colne Society for Mentally Handicapped Children. The Mayor, Alderman J Helmn, will attend*

Majestic, Sunday 2 April, 'Marx Bros. at the Circus' and Gene Kelly in 'Three Musketeers'. **Palace**, from Monday 10 April, 'South Pacific' for 12 days, except Sundays.

Nelson Leader, 26 April 1961, carried a report of a small fire in the staff room at the **Palace** during the showing of 'Flaming Star'. There were 500 people present that Wednesday evening. Mrs Joyce Maley was the manageress and Wallace Askew the projectionist.

In the *Nelson Leader* of 30 June it was reported that the Marsden Building Society was to take over the **Majestic**. It was the end of Victory Theatres. Star Cinemas were to take over the two other cinemas in the circuit, the **Empire** and the **Princess** at **Accrington**, but the Majestic was to close. The last programme, from Sunday 2 July, was Jerry Lewis in Cinderfella' and Bob Hope in 'The Paleface'. It closed on Saturday 8 July 1961. The last manager was Harold Lister. He had begun at the Majestic as a boy thirty years earlier having worked first as a printer's 'devil' and then as call-boy at the Palace. He went to the Majestic as fourth operator becoming the chief operator in 1938. The **Majestic** was demolished. The new head offices of the Marsden Building Society were erected on the site.

Nelson Leader, 11 August 1961, reported that a rumour that the **Palace** was to close was denied by the manager, Lew Askew. **Palace**, week commencing 28 August, 'One Hundred and One Dalmatians', also 'The Kettles on Old McDonald's Farm'.

Palace, Monday 11 September for six days, 'Can Can', Frank Sinatra, Shirley Maclane. **Grand**, Sunday 10 September for seven days, 'World by Night': *everything from striptease to all-in wrestlng,* also 'Jets Over the Atlantic'. These films reflect the change of programmes at the Palace and the Grand after Star took over or since the other cinemas closed. Under the Hartleys the Palace usually showed 'men's' films - westerns, gangsters, thrillers, boxing films, etc. The Grand specialised

in 'women's' pictures - love stories, weepies etc. Week commencing 18 September the **Grand** showed 'Whistle Down the Wind', made locally, and 'The Long Shadow'. **Palace**, week commencing 6 November, 'Call Me Madam', St John's Operatic Society.

Nelson Leader, 17 November 1961, carried a report about 25 years ago:

*Super Cinema bid rejected. on 14 November 1936. Magistrates turned down a bid by a London estates firm to build a cinema on Walverden Mill site in Leeds Road. (*opposite the Palace.)

It had passed the Town Planning Committee without objection but all eight cinema operators in Nelson objected at the court hearing, presided over by the mayor, Alderman P J Quinn. It was said that the accommodation in town already exceeded public demand.

Perhaps I should mention here the cinema that never was. For many years there was a sign near some old wooden buildings near the Station Hotel saying 'Site for a new Hartley Super Cinema'. Did Herbert Hartley really intend to build a new cinema after the Second World War or was it to deter the big circuits from moving into Nelson? It would have stood mid-way between his other cinemas, the Palace, Grand and Queen's if it had been built.

1962

Week commencing Sunday 21 January, **Palace**, 'Naked as Nature Intended', also 'Pavements of Paris'; **Grand**, 'Pal Joey', also 'No Time to Die' (Monday - Wednesday), Belinda Lee as Aphrodite in 'Goddess of Love' (Thursday - Saturday).

Nelson Leader, 9 February 1962: ***Grand**, retained by public demand for 7 more days, Cliff Richard in 'The Young Ones'.* **Grand**, 18 February for 7 days, again *by public demand*, 'Room at the Top' (X), also 'The Kitchen' (X).

Palace, week commencing 11 March for 7 days, 'The Magnificent Seven'.

Nelson Leader, 16 March 1962, **Regent** Tombola Club announce that a new blower has been installed, also the biggest electric Number board in town. **Palace**, Saturday 25 March, Star Juniors Club, Johnny Weismuller in 'Devil Goddess', two cartoons, comedy, interest films: *Special attraction in person this week the Twisting Midget. Come and enter our twisting competition.*

Palace, week commencing Monday 7 May for 13 days, 'Ben Hur'. **Grand**, week commencing Sunday 6 May, 'Nudes of the World' also 'House of Sin'. **Palace**, Saturday 19 May, 2pm, Ballet Matinée, Loreto School of Dancing (Cinderella, Babes in the Wood, Mother Goose, Sleeping Beauty and other ballets). **Grand**, week commencing Sunday 27 May for 7 days, 'It's Trad Dad!', Helen Shapiro, Chubby Checker, Chris Barber, Kenny Ball, Terry Lightfoot, Acker Bilk, Temperance 7, etc.

Arthur Peel retired from Barrowford U.D.C. in May through ill health. He was 75.

Nelson Leader, 9 September 1962, article about Evelyn Askew (wife of Palace projectionist Wallace Askew) who had been manager at the Grand for the last four months.

Palace, week commencing 1 October, 'The Quaker Girl', St.John's Operatic Society.

Nelson Leader, 9 November 1962, reported that Lew Askew was leaving the area to manage Star Ballrooms in the northern area. Star had converted some of their cinemas to ballrooms.

Nelson Grammar School had its speech day at the **Palace** in November.

The *Nelson Leader* of 23 November had a picture of the **Palace** gallery and an article on the Palace in general. The gallery had been closed in 1947, and had provided 750 of the 2,000 seats at the Palace. The gallery was said to be haunted by a ghost called Fred who was inclined to throw bits of wood at people.

1963

Nelson Star Juniors Club at **Palace**, 5 January. Big comedy show. Episode 11 of 'Phantom Empire'. *Nelson Leader*, 8 March 1963, 'Nelson 62', colour film record of the year in Nelson by Pendle Film Society. **Palace**, week commencing 7 April for 7 days, 'Harold Lloyd's World of Comedy' plus one full hour all laughter comedy cartoon show. **Grand**, Monday 8 April for six days, 'The Fast Lady', also 'Stranglehold'.

> ***Palace** turns to gambling. Palace Cinema to be a Casino (Bingo and Gambling Club). Gambling room for roulette and chemin de fer. Lavish refreshment bars. The interior will take on a completely new look. Lew Askew, manager of the theatre.*
>
> *Nelson Leader*, 19 April, 1963

The Cecil Bateson Festival left the Palace in 1961 when hiring charges became too high.

Palace, week commencing 21 April for 7 days, Robert Mitchum in 'Foreign Intrigue', also Kirk Douglas in 'The Indian Fighter'. After the last performance on Saturday evening films stopped at the Palace. The **Palace Casino** opened on Friday 3 May. Dennis Tanner of Coronation Street (Philip Lowry) was the opener.

Arthur Peel died on 29 April 1963 aged 78.

The Star Juniors Club was transferred from the **Palace** to the **Grand**.

The *Nelson Leader* of 2 August 1963 had a picture of the staff at the **Royal Cinema** some time before 1918. It had been sent by a Mrs Wigmore of Carlisle, daughter of Tom Green, proprietor of the Royal. It showed Walter Gill, caretaker, his brother Bert Gill, operator, Willie Schofield, pianist, Harold Kay, attendant, Tom Green, and the lecturer whose name Mrs Wigmore could not recall.

The *Nelson Leader* of 6 September 1963 had a picture of Rupert Whittaker, *The first Nelson talkies.*

Palace, week commencing 7 October, 'The Music Man', St John's Operatic Society. Bingo transferred to the **Grand** Monday-Saturday that week.

Another article on cinema nostalgia in the *Nelson Leader*, 22 November 1963, and a picture of the **De Luxe** taken before 1914. The *Nelson Leader* 29 November 1963 carried a letter from T Thompson of Winsford, Cheshire, saying that Pearl White had visited Nelson.

Grand, week commencing 1 December for seven days, 'Tom Jones', Albert Finney.

The **Palace** continued with bingo up to Christmas Eve. It was closed Christmas Day. On Boxing Day it went back to pictures with Yul Brynner in 'Escape from Zahrain' also 'The Durante Affair'. **Palace**, Sunday 29 December for 7 days, Elvis Presley in 'Blue Hawaii'.

1964

A letter in the *Nelson Leader* of 3 January 1964 recalled the silent serials in Nelson cinemas. 'Pearl of the Army', which followed 'Exploits of Elaine' popularly known as 'The Clutching Hand', was shown at the **Electric**. 'Peril's of Pauline', Pearl White's first serial, was shown at the **De Luxe**. 'Broken Coin', 'What Happened to Mary', 'Master Key', and 'Purple Domino' were also remembered by the writer.

Another letter was from ex-**Tivoli** players, Molly and Phyllis Hendrea of Worthing. They said the following were now dead: Vivian Edmonds, Gladys Ford-Howitt, Minnie Watersford, and George Sheldon. The writers had retired from the theatre in 1939 and taken a newsagent's and confectioner's.

Grand, Sunday 26 January for 7 days, on the new Cinemascope screen, 'Dr No', also 'The Flight that Disappeared'. **Grand**, week commencing Sunday 2 February', 'The Birds'. Star Junior Club, 'Blackbeard the Pirate'. Comedy. Cartoons, and episode 5, 'Radar Men from the Moon'. **Palace**, week commencing Sunday, 26 April, 'Under the Yum Yum Tree', and 'Women of the World'.

Palace, Monday, 8 June (Monday - Wednesday), 'That Kind of Girl', also 'Fury of the Vikings'. After the show on Wednesday 10 June 1964 films ended at the **Palace**. It went over to bingo on Thursday, 11 June. R Hellawell was manager at the Palace and Grand at the time.

The *Nelson Leader* 12 June had a letter from Dan Hargreaves of Nelson about the **Palace**. He was a call boy when it opened, later assistant stage manager to Rolando Martin. He said although it held 2,000 people, it was usually 'house full'. Artistes who visited included Marie Lloyd, Victoria Monks, Vesta Tilley, Daisy Darmer, Edna La Tone, Florrie Forde, Houdini, Lafayette (illusionist), Rameses, who sawed the same lady in two twice nightly, Chung Ling Soo (chinese illusionist), Tom Graves (from Barrowford), rider of the wheel of death. John Tiller and Jason and Montgomery pantomimes, Syd Chaplin in 'Mumming Birds'.

Grand, week commencing Sunday, 14 June, Elvis Presley in 'Love in Las Vegas', also 'The Gladiators' (for seven days).

A correspondent in the *Nelson Leader* claimed to have seen Al Jolson in 'The Singing Fool' at Bradford in 1926. A letter on 19 June pointed out that the film was only made in 1928. He went on to say that the Nelson cinema owners, by mutual agreement, made no move to convert to talkies for six months in case talkies proved a flash in the pan! Rupert Whittaker said he got all the deaf folk at the **De Luxe** after all the other cinemas had converted to talkies.

Another correspondent said that 'The Singing Fool' was shown at the Savoy, Bradford on 4 March 1929.

The **Palace** went back to pictures again on Sunday 12 July with Yul Brynner in 'Kings of the Sun' and 'Stowaway in the Sky' for seven days. A free return bus service was laid on for bingo fans to take them to **Colne Hippodrome**.

Palace, Monday 20 July for six days, 'Hot Enough for June' also 'The Switch'. Children's matinée Saturday at 2pm. Circle 9d, Stalls 1/-, cartoon, comedies, serial.

The *Nelson Leader* of 31 July 1964 reported the opening of the Marsden Building Society Offices on the site of the **Majestic**.

Grand, week commencing Sunday 30 August for seven days (at normal prices) 'Hard Day's Night', the Beatles. **Palace**, week commencing 5 October, 'The Merry Widow', St John's Operatic Society.

Another letter in *The Leader* of 23 October from Dan Hargreaves about the **Grand Theatre** of fifty years ago, when Mrs Willis-Croft (Greenwood-Croft?) had the lease. George Mudd was general manager (he was born in show business), Harry Slater stage manager, Teddy Kirkbright property man.

On Sunday 25 October the **Grand** had its first live show for many years - Big Beat Night with the Four Pennies, the Naturals, the Saracens, the Song Pedlars, the Fabulous Footsteps, Johnny Rick. and Tony Hartwill, seats 10/- and 8/-.

Palace, week commencing Sunday 13 December for 7 nights of sin, 'London in the Raw' also 'Suleiman the Conqueror'. No Saturday matinée at **Palace** on 26 December, free show for children at **Grand** on Thursday 24 December at 2pm.

1965

Palace (and **Hippodrome, Colne**), week commencing 4 January 1965, 'South Pacific'.

There was an article in the *Nelson Leader* on 26 February 1965 about the great lovers of the screen and local cinemas. An average of 5,000 attended the Palace and Grand in 1965. 'Goldfinger' or 'My Fair Lady' or similar films boosted attendance to 10,000. Nelson's seven cinemas had a total capacity of 6,124 (the Royal and De Luxe were not included in this figure). The Palace and Grand had a capacity of 2,230 in 1965.

Nelson Leader, 28 May 1965, advertised that Pakistani films would be shown at the **Palace** on Sunday afternoons for a trial period commencing 30 May: 'Songam', Vijayantimala.

Grand, week commencing Monday, 26 July, 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' also 'Lobo'. **Palace**, week commencing 4 October, 'The Student Prince', St John's Operatic Society. **Palace**, 13 November, Saturday matinée, Laurel and Hardy in 'Blockheads', plus cartoons, serials and comedies. **Palace**, Sunday 5 December for four days, Dean Martin, '38.24.36', also 'How I lived as Eve'. Thursday - Saturday, Yul Brynner, 'Invitation to a Gunfighter' also 'That Man from Rio'. **Palace**, Sunday 19 December, Nelson Civic Junior Choir Concert, 3/-. 20 December, Monday - Wednesday, 'Night Passage', also 'Meet in the Morning'. Closed Thursday - Saturday, re-opening Sunday 26 December. Free childrens' Xmas party at **Palace**, Saturday, 18 December.

1966

Week commencing 2 January 1966, **Grand**, 'West Side Story'; **Palace**, 'Ivanhoe' also 'Tarrern Goes to India'. Week commencing 16 January, **Palace**, Elvis Presley in 'Harem Holiday' also 'Spartan Gladiators'. **Grand**, 'Moll Flanders', also 'Ambush'. Week commencing Sunday 20 February, **Palace**, the Beatles in 'Help', also Gerry and the Pacemakers in 'Ferry Cross the Mersey'. **Grand**, from Monday 21 February, 'Rob Roy', also 'Pinocchio' (Monday - Wednesday), 'The Collector' (X), (Thursday - Saturday). **Palace**, four super Saturdays: Shirley Temple in films specially for boys and girls; Saturday 12 March 'Bright Eyes'; 19 March 'Dimples'; 26 March 'Heidi'; 2 April 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm'; plus cartoons, serials and comedies, every Saturday afternoon, admission circle 1/-, stalls 9d.

Palace, Monday 18 April for six days, 'Wizard of Oz', and 'Tom Thumb'. **Grand**, week commencing 5 June, seven days, 'Life at the Top', also 'The Vanishing Buskers'. **Palace**, week commencing Sunday 26 June, 'Fanny Hill', also 'Naked Freedom'. **Grand**, Monday 4 July, and week, 'Mary Poppins'. **Palace**, Monday 11 July for six days, 'Peter Pan', also 'Emil and the Detectives'. Sunday 17 July for one day, Brigitte Bardot in 'Mam'selle Striptease', also Guy Madison, Kim Novak, in 'Five Against the House'. Closed Monday-Wednesday for alterations. Re-opening Thursday 21 July 1966 as the **Star Bingo** and Social Club.

Grand, week commencing 17 July, 'Doctor in Clover', also 'Dateline Diamonds'.

Palace, Monday 3 October for six days, 'The Desert Song', St John's Operatic Society'. **Grand**, Sunday 2 October, and week, Elvis Presley in 'Paradise - Hawaian Style', also 'Kid Rodello'. **Grand**, Monday 10 October for six days, 'The Greatest Story Ever Told'. This film was described as thoroughly bad in a letter to the *Nelson Leader*, 28 October 1966. A particular objection was that Jesus and John the Baptist were portrayed as 'strong, handsome, protestant, Anglo-Saxon, all-American boys' which the writer regarded as an insidious racist myth. Another letter complained of rowdyism at local cinema.

Grand, week commencing Monday 12 December, 'Goal', World Cup 1966, also Bernard Cribbins in 'A Home of Your Own'.

The *Nelson Leader* of 16 December 1966 had an article by Geoffrey Mattock - 'Which was your heartthrob?' about screen heart-throbs. There was another article about 'The Barkers and Bouncers', Tom Ainsworth's recollections of local cinemas. on 22 December 1966.

1967

Grand, week commencing 8 January 1967, Sunday, Belinda Lee 'Way of the Wicked' also 'Night Holds Terror'; Monday - Wednesday Raquel Welsh in 'Fantastic Voyage' also 'Guns for the Dictator'; Thursday - Saturday, Rita Tushingham in 'The Trap', also 'The Pad'. Grand Horror Repertory week, Sunday 15 January 'The Screaming Skull' and 'Cage of Doom'; Monday, 'Teenage Frankenstein' and 'The Spectre'; Tuesday, 'Invasion of the Hill Creatures' and 'I married a Werewolf'; Wednesday, 'The Castle of Terror' and 'Night of the Blood Beast'; Thursday, 'The Day the World Ended' and 'The Beast with a Million Eyes'; Friday, 'Terror of Dr Hitchcock' and 'A Bucket of Blood'; Saturday, 'Demons of the Swamp' and 'Horror'; continuous from 6.15pm, last performance 7.25pm; open 5.45pm. Children's matinée Saturday, 2pm, 9d and 1/-.

Nelson Leader 13 January 1967, had a letter about theatrical memories referring to Arthur Leslie, who became famous as Jack Walker in Coronation Street, at the Tivoli.

Nelson Leader 20 January 1967, carried a report about a 'book full of memories', the recollections of a theatrical landlady, Mrs Dora Austin. She had a theatrical lodging house in West Street, later in Market Square. She had pictures of Wee Georgie Wood, Beryl Orde, and Alfredo. Elroy the armless wonder was a supporting act at Salem School for A1 pictures. He drew wonderful crayon pictures with his feet and also played the violin. The projector stood fully exposed in the centre of the room at Salem School. Other supporting artistes included a young local tenor, Billy Philpott, and a baritone named Pemberton. Leylands Marionette Show visited Nelson and performed on the site of the **Palace** before it was built.

Another letter in the *Nelson Leader* of 27 January recalled Elroy the armless wonder staying at the writer's home when he was a boy. He carried his gear—cornet, etc.—to the **Palace** for him. He was fascinated by the way he would call for cigars and take the money from his slippers. He still had a photograph of Elroy.

In the *Nelson Leader* of 3 February 1967 was a letter from Herbert Crowson (Will Marsden) saying that T Thompson, former resident manager at the **Tivoli** during the repertory days, had died about a month ago. He was always present in the entrance hall to welcome patrons. After leaving Nelson he took over as resident manager at the **Magnet Cinema, Winsford**, Cheshire, occupying the post until the cinema closed two years previously. Mr Crowson was a lifelong friend of Mr Thompson and had been a part-time player in the **Tivoli** rep.

Grand, week commencing 12 February, first time at normal prices, 'The Ten Commandments'. Grand, week commencing Monday 8 May, 'My Fair Lady'. Grand, week commencing Monday 21 August, Carry On Repertory week: Monday, 'Carry On Regardless', also 'The Scarlet Blade'; Tuesday, 'Carry On Cabby', also 'Face of Fu Manchu'; Wednesday, 'Carry On Spying', also 'Gold of the Seven Saints'; Thursday, 'Carry On Cruising', also 'Devil Ship Pirates'; Friday, 'Carry On Teacher', and 'Count of Monte Cristo'; Saturday, 'Carry On Nurse', also 'The Son of Captain Blood'. Grand, week commencing Sunday 12 November, Horror Repertory week, changing nightly, positively adults only: Sunday, 'Kiss of the Vampire' and 'Secret of Blood Island'; Monday, Christopher Lee in 'Dracula' and 'Monster on the Campus'; Tuesday, 'House of Dracula', Lou Cheney, also 'The Thing that Couldn't Die';

Wednesday, 'Evil of Frankenstein', Peter Cushing, also 'The Monolith Monsters'; Thursday, Boris Karloff in 'Frankenstein', also 'Day of the Triffids'; Friday, Peter Cushing, 'Brides of Dracula', also 'Girls on the Loose'; Saturday, Lou Cheney junior, 'Son of Dracula' also 'King Kong v Gonzilla'.

Grand, Sunday 10 December - Wednesday, 'Sex in the Grass', also 'Who Wants to Sleep?'; Thursday only, 'Richard III'; Friday and Saturday, 'Cleopatra', Elizabeth Taylor. Boxing Day (Tuesday) and all week, 'Bambi', also 'Monkeys Go Home'.

1968

Grand, *now super heated to give added comfort.* The Grand had a reputation for being cold and draughty, probably because it was wide. Sunday 7 January - Wednesday, Donald Wolfit in 'Blood of the Vampire' (x), adults only' also Boris Karloff in 'Grip of the Strangler'; Thursday-Saturday, Dick Van Dyke in 'Divorce, American Style', and 'Seven Guns for the McGregors'.

Grand, Monday 18 March for six days, 'Taming of the Shrew', Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton.

Nelson Leader of 29 March 1968 reports the St John's Operatic Society holding on to the **Palace** for the 1968 show.

Grand, week commencing Sunday 5 May, 'Up the Junction' also 'Albert Carter QOSO'.

In the *Nelson Leader* of 10 May 1968 there were recollections of a Festival of Music at the **Palace** in the 1930s and of Eugene Stratton and Isobel Baillie there.

Grand, week commencing Monday, 27 May, 'South Pacific' (film): week commencing 1 July for six days, 'Sound of Music' (film), circle 7/6d, child 4/-; rear circle 6/6, child/OAP 3/6; stalls 6/-, child 3/-; front stalls 5/-, child 2/6. The film was retained for a further seven days from Sunday 7 July.

Grand, Sunday, 28 July, 'Teenage Frankenstein', also 'Demons of the Swamp'; Monday - Wednesday, 'Zulu', also 'Hell Drivers'; Thursday - Saturday, 'Oklahoma'.

Grand, week commencing 5 August, 'Planet of the Apes', also 'Promenade'. Sunday 29 September and all week, 'Goldfinger' and 'Thunderball'. Sunday 6 October for six days (not Thursday), 'Bandolero'; Thursday only, 'Becket', Richard Burton.

Nelson Leader 22 November 1968 had a picture and report of the Nelson Technical and Secondary School speech day held the previous Saturday at the **Grand**. Sunday 15 December and week, 'Barbarella', also 'Spare Tyres'. Monday, 24 December for five days (closed Xmas Day) 'The Wizard of Oz', also 'Tom Thumb'.

1969

Grand, Sunday, 12 January for six days (not Thursday), 'The Graduate'; Thursday only, 'Julius Caesar', Marlon Brando. Saturday matinée, 'Jungle Jim', three cartoons, serial, comedy, etc. 1/-, 1/6.

The *Nelson Leader* of 17 January 1969 had an article, 'Giant of the Pioneer Days of the Cinema - Herbert Hartley', but it contained many inaccuracies.

Grand, Sunday 23 February - Wednesday, Frank Sinatra in 'The Detective' (X), Thursday only, 'The Greatest Story ever Told', Charlton Heston; Friday and Saturday, one big show at 6.15pm, 'Von Ryan's Express', Frank Sinatra.

Nelson Leader, 28 February 1969, *Nelson Film Society win a major award at Scottish Film Festival with their film, 'The Lonely One'.* The death was reported of Albert Spencer, a former stage manager at the Palace.

Grand, Sunday 23 March for seven days, 'Helga'. *For the first time on the screen, a sex education film for all.* **Grand**, Sunday 30 March, 'Blood of the Executioner', also 'Hell Below Zero'. Monday, for five days (not Thursday), Yul Brynner in 'Return of the 7'; Thursday only, 'Jane Eyre', Orson Wells. Grand, Monday 7 July and week, 'Dr. Doolittle'. **Palace**, October 20th and week, 'Hello Dolly', St John's Operatic Society.

The *Nelson Leader* of 10 October 1969 had an article abour artistes who appeared at **Burnley Victoria**, **Nelson Palace** and **King's, Colne**.

1970

Grand, Sunday 4 January for seven days, Hywell Bennett, Lyn Redgrave in 'Virgin Soldiers', also Pierre Price in 'Thunder at the Border', Sunday 6.45pm, weekdays continuous from 5.35pm, matinée Tuesday 2pm, children's matinée Saturday 2pm. Monday 12 January for six days, 'Dr. Zhivago'.

The *Nelson Leader* of 6 February 1970 had an article on theatre pianist Willie Lee, pianist at the **Grand Theatre**. He toured the country with Bud Flanagan, Harry Korris, etc.

The *Nelson Leader* of 27 February reported the death of Stanley James Hartley (61), co-owner with his brother Clifford of the **Palace** and **Grand**. He was a past treasurer and active member of Nelson Conservative Association.

Grand, week commencing Sunday 12 April, 'The Killing of Sister George'. Sunday, 26 April, 'Midnight Cowboy'. Sunday, 10 May, 'Women in Love' (both for seven days). Sunday, 17 May, 'Jack the Ripper'. Monday 18 May for six days, 'Spring and Port Wine', also Harry Secombe in 'Rhubarb'.

The **Century Theatre** visited Nelson, parking in Leeds Road. They gave 'Hamlet' from Wednesday 13 May to Tuesday 19 May (except Sunday), 'She Stoops to Conquer', Wednesday 20 May to Saturday 23; 'Spring and Port Wine', 25 May to 30 May; 'The Wind in the Sassafras Trees', Tuesday 2 June to Saturday 6 June. Friday 29 May, an evening with Jake Thackray. Prices 10/-, 8/-, 6/-.

Grand, Monday 27 July for six days, 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'. Grand, Sunday 27 September for seven days, 'Where Eagles Dare', Richard Burton, Clint Eastwood. This film was retained for another seven days (4 October and week).

Palace, week commencing Monday 5 October, 'White Horse Inn', St John's Operatic Society.

There was a silent film show of 'Birth of a Nation' at Nelson and Colne College of Further Education on Friday, 11 December. Mrs Nellie Heys, née Parkinson (70), played the piano. She had played the piano at **Andrews Pictures** in **Burnley** (later the **Roxy**) for four years, starting aged 17, in a seven-piece band. She left when she married in 1923, but played as a substitute at the **Regent** and **Majestic** afterwards.

1971

Grand, Sunday 3 January, 'Goliath and the Vampires', also 'Curse of the Dead'. 4 January and for the week, Walt Disney's 'Smoky' and 'Pinocchio'. *Nelson Leader* Family Circle gave away tickets for 'Pinocchio'. **Grand**, 14 February and week, 'Oliver'. Sunday, 21 February, 'Saturday Night and Sunday Morning', also 'The Evil Eye'. Monday, 22 February, 'Oliver' retained for six more days. Week commencing Sunday, 14 March, 'Witchfinder General', also 'Love in Our Time' (Monday - Wednesday), 'West Side Story' (Thursday - Saturday). Monday 11 April and week, '101 Dalmatians'. Sunday 25 April - Wednesday, 'Do You Want to Remain a Virgin For Ever?', also 'Legend of the Witches'. Thursday only, 'An Evening with the Royal Ballet', also 'The Soldier's Tale'; Friday and Saturday, 'The

Private Life of Sherlock Holmes' and 'Underground'. Sunday 25 July for seven days, 'Dad's Army' and 'Cuckoo Patrol'.

Palace, 11 - 16 October, 'My Fair Lady', St John's Operatic Society. Except for the annual show by St John's Operatic Society, the Palace had remained a bingo hall since showing its last film. The *Nelson Leader* of 5 November announced that the **Palace** was to go back to being a cinema in new plans. It was to have four auditoria seating 130 -140 people plus bingo. It never happened. The same paper reported the death of Lew Askew aged 53.

Grand, Sunday 21 November for six days (not Thursday), 'Le Mans', also 'Challenge in the Sky'; Thursday only, 'Swan Lake'. Sunday 28 November for seven days, 'Soldier Blue' (this film had already been shown in the week commencing 3 October for seven days), also 'The New Seekers'. Week commencing Sunday 25 December -Wednesday, 'Alice in Wonderland', also 'The Hand that Thought He was a Racoon'; Thursday - Saturday, 'Carry On Up the Khyber', also 'Carry On Doctor'.

1972

Grand, week commencing Sunday 13 February, 'Cromwell'. Sunday 5 March for seven days, 'The Lion in Winter'. Sunday 12 March for seven days, 'Danish Blue'. Sunday 19 March, 'Danish Blue' retained for *a second great week*. Sunday 9 April and week, 'Tom Thumb', also 'Wizard of Oz'. Sunday 23 April and week, 'Paint Your Wagon' (retained for second week). Sunday 14 May for four days, 'Countess Dracula'; Thursday only, 'Monterey Pop' plus 'Don't Look Back'; Friday and Saturday, 'The Magnificent Seven', also 'Kid Galahad'. Week commencing Sunday 21 May, 'Straw Dogs', also 'Bugs Bunny Show'. Week commencing Sunday 4 June, 'Waterloo'. Sunday 13 August for seven days, 'The Devils'.

Palace, week commencing 2 October - 7 October, 'Fiddler on the Roof', St John's Operatic Society. The **Palace** was still a bingo hall.

Grand, Sunday 1 October and week, 'Dr No'. Sunday 29 October and week, 'Gone with the Wind'. Sunday, 12 November for seven days, Keith Michell in 'Henry VIII and his six wives'. Sunday 10 December for four days, 'The Nympho', also 'The Erotic Three'; Thursday - Saturday, 'A Man Called Horse', also 'Little Big Man'. Children's matinée at 2pm Saturday, only 10p. Sunday 24 December for six days (closed Christmas Day), 'Dumbo', also 'Napoleon and Samantha'.

1973

Grand, week commencing 7 January, for seven days, 'Ben Hur'. 4 February for seven days, 'Ryan's Daughter'. Sunday 11 February for seven days, 'Mary, Queen of Scots'. Sunday 25 February for seven days, '2001: A Space Odyssey'. 4 March for seven days, 'Pinocchio' and 'Old Yeller'. Sunday 11 March for seven days, 'Soldier Blue' (third time round) and 'Carnal Knowledge'. Sunday 29 April for seven days, 'Ryan's Daughter'. Sunday 6 May for seven days, 'The Godfather'. Sunday 10 June for seven days, 'Clockwork Orange' and 'Kamsutra Rides Again'. Sunday 17 June for four days, 'Midnight Cowboy', also 'The Thomas Crown Affair'; Thursday - Saturday, Charles Bronson in 'The Mechanic', also 'Cannon for Cordoba'. Sunday 1 July for seven days, 'Cabaret'; children's matinée at 2pm, 10p., 'Mystery of Bird Island'.

Nelson Leader, 29 June 1973, Memories of the **Palace**, an article about Arthur Hargreaves, (Mac of Henry and Mac), of Barkerhouse Road, Nelson, who was property master during the war. He was 67 in 1973, and recalled a number of stars at the Palace including Florrie Forde, Eddie Gray, the Henderson family, and Albert Modley. He also recalled Arthur White staging revues and pantomimes there. The *Nelson Leader* of 27 July 1973 reported his death.

Nelson

Grand, week commencing Sunday 29 July, 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'.

Nelson Leader, 5 October 1973 article on local cinemas. It noted that Laurie Lawler was manager at the **Queen's** at one time.

Grand, Sunday 14 October for four days, 'Straw Dogs', also 'El Condor'; Thursday - Saturday, 'Carry On Abroad' and 'Beyond the Law'.

Nelson Leader, article on the **Majestic**. Bought by Arthur Peel in 1922. Harold Lister went to the Majestic as fourth operator in 1930. He was formerly a printer's devil and call boy at the **Palace**. Box office smashers, 'The Great Dictator' and 'The Great Caruso'. Mr Lister worked 70 hours a week for £2 12s ½d in 1938 as chief operator. Mrs Teresa Wragg started as the cleaner and graduated to usherette and pay-box cashier. She was at the **Majestic** 28 years. She was ice-cream seller and kept children in order at matinées. [picture of cinema and staff]. Mr Lister was manager from 1948. He went to **Burnley Palace** as manager for a time. Mr Lister said neither he nor Mrs Wragg ever had a letter of thanks. Arthur Peel suffered a stroke which caused him to sell out.

The *Nelson Leader* of 19 October had a letter in response to the article saying tea and biscuits were supplied to patrons at mid-week matinées, but only to those in the dress circle.

St John's Operatic Society gave 'Brigadoon' at **Colne Municipal Hall** in 1973. Their era at the **Palace** must have ended in 1972. The Palace was still a bingo hall.

Grand, week commencing 4 November for seven days, 'Live and Let Die'. It was retained for the following week. Sunday 25 November for four days, 'The Devils', also 'Cisco Pike'; Thursday - Saturday, Ronnie Corbett and Beryl Reid in 'No Sex Please, We're British', also John Wayne in 'The Cowboys'.

The *Nelson Leader* had a plea for a better theatre after the near flop of the show at Colne Municipal Hall.

The *Nelson Leader* of 14 December 1973 had a letter from Shaf Bukari about the **Grand** being cold for the Pakistani film show on Sunday afternoon. Admission 55p - hall nearly full. The Grand manager at the time was Roy Halliwell.

Grand, Sunday 23 December and all week (except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day), 'The Sword in the Stone' and 'The Incredible Journey'. Saturday matinée at 2pm, only 10p. *Special this Saturday, free sweets.* Lionheart cartoons. Sunday, 30 December for seven days, 'Battle for the Planet of the Apes', also 'Neptune Factor'.

1974

Nelson Leader, 4 January 1974, article, First Cinema in Town - Golden Oldies - The **Alhambra**. (This article is a bit mixed up in regard to when it was a variety theatre.)

Grand, week commencing Sunday 6 January, 'Jesus Christ Superstar', also 'Artistry in Tureen'.

Nelson Leader, 14 January 1974, article on local musicians at the flicks - Golden Oldies.

Grand, Sunday 20 January, for seven *Sexcertificate* days, 'Last Tango in Paris', also 'The Magic Carpet'.

Nelson Leader, 1 February 1974, letter about Matt Pratt who was amongst the first to join the **Regent** orchestra when the Regent opened. He played cornet solos at the interval. He also played in the band at the Palais de Danse when it opened. He was living in retirement in the Manchester area in 1974.

Grand, Sunday 10 February and week, 'Enter the Dragon', and 'Cleopatra Jones'. Sunday 17 February, retained for seven more days. Sunday 3 March and

week, 'Lady Sings the Blues' and 'Daredevil Men'. Sunday 17 March and week, 'Day of the Jackal' also 'Tenetre 7002'. Sunday 7 April for seven days, 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs', also 'My Dog, the Thief'. 13 April for seven days, 'Sleeping Beauty' also 'The Wild Country'.

Nelson Leader 19 April 1974, a letter from Peter Sagar, then chairman of Nelson Local History Society, on the **Regent**. *Nelson Leader* 29 March 1974, readers help fill in Regent history gaps.

Grand, Sunday 12 May 1974 for seven days, 'The Legend of Frenchie King', 8.30pm. Brigitte Bardot. Claudia Cardinale, also Leslie Phillips in 'Not Now Darling', 6.55pm.

After the last show on Saturday 18 May the **Grand** closed down except for Pakistani film shows on Sunday afternoons.

The *Nelson Leader* of 24 May 1974 reported that a new cinema was likely. Brian Tattersall of Unit 4 was planning a three-cinema unit in the Arndale Centre. It never happened.

80s/90s

The **Grand** was re-opened as a cinema on Saturday 21 March 1981 by Dennis Geldard, a former projectionist at the **Capitol**. The opening film was 'Moonraker', with Roger Moore as James Bond, shown Saturday - Wednesday at 7pm with matinées at 2.30pm except Wednesday. From Thursday - Saturday it was 'Abba: The Movie'. Admission £1.20p, children under 14 and OAPs 60p. As an independent, Mr. Geldard experienced difficulty getting films. Unit 4 cinemas took over the **Grand** later in the year. The Grand closed again after showing 'Poltergeist 11' and 'The Other Side' on Thursday 23 October 1986. Admission then was £1 50p all ages. A few months later Unit 4 opened the **Grand** again.

In 1989 the Unit 4 chain of cinemas was taken over by Apollo Leisure who continued to run the Grand. It finally closed on 11 January 1994. The last film was Mel Brookes in 'Robin Hood - Men in Tights'.

Plate 10 The Grand in bingo days showing the overall canopy.

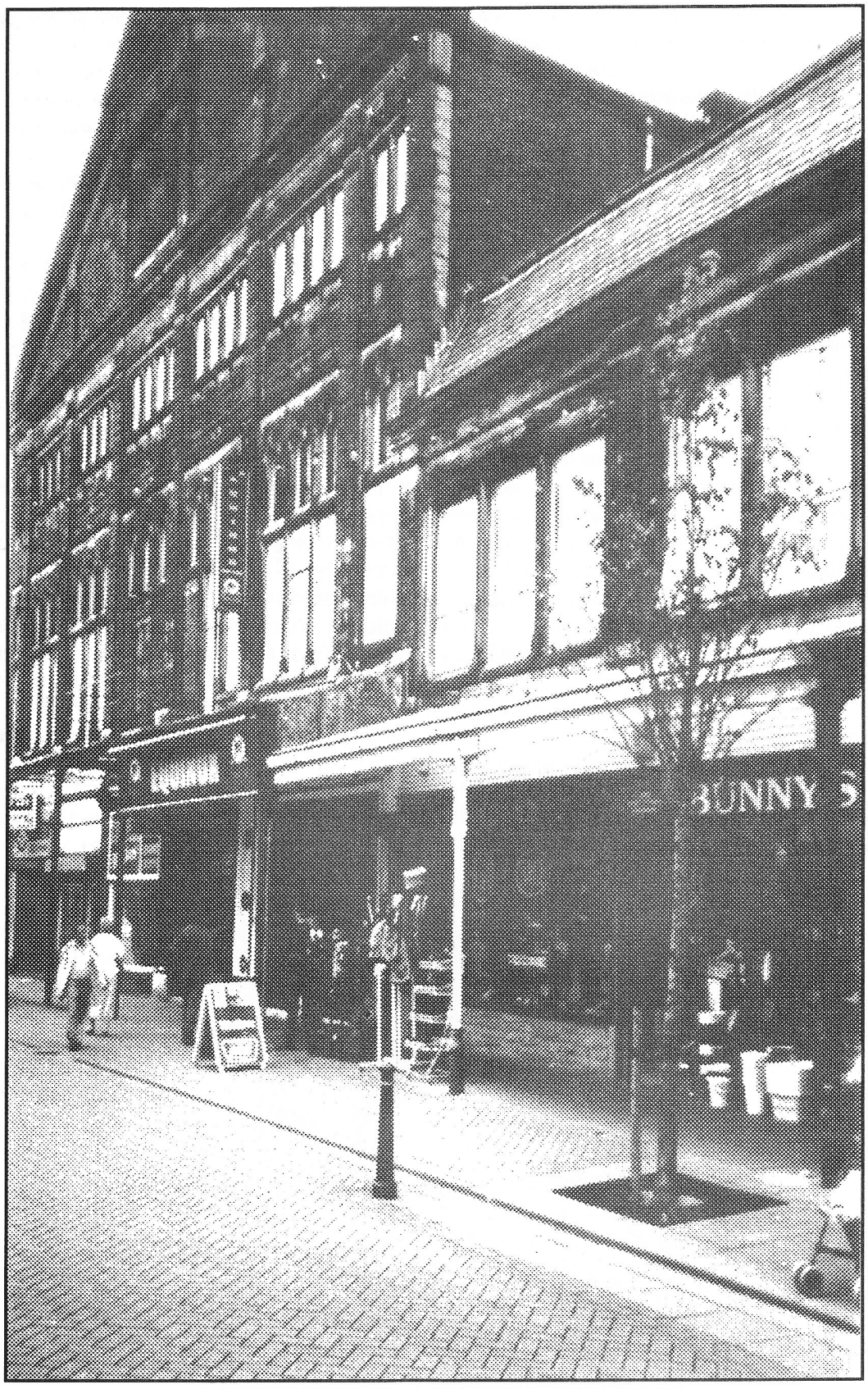


Plate 11 The Grand Theatre in 1998 as the Equinox night-club

Brierfield

Brierfield is situated between Nelson and Burnley. Its main roads divide it into quarters which formed the four wards of the former Urban District. It had three cinemas, all within a short distance of each other in South Ward. The Carleton Working Men's Club was built about 1900 in Walter Street. It is also known as Walton Street Working Men's Club. Walter Street runs parallel with the main Burnley Road. Hill Street runs between them. The upper floor of the club has an entrance from Hill Street. In the early days it was known as the **Public Hall**. On 6 January 1906 the Birkett Amateur Dramatic Society from Padiham gave 'East Lynne' there. In January 1910 there is mention of a Carleton Club Debating Society.

The *Burnley Express* of 12 March 1910 announced that Brierfield was going to have a picture hall. On the following Monday Messrs B Crossley Ltd would convert the **Public Hall** into an electric picture palace. What was shown at the opening is not known. For the week commencing 28 March, every evening at 7.30pm, **Crossley's Electric Picture Palace** announced 2 hours 30 minutes of *real entertainment*: 'Sexton Blake', 'Foolshead has a Deal', 'Lake of Lucerne'. This hall had become the **Premier Pictures** by 1913 if not earlier, or the **Premier Kinema**.

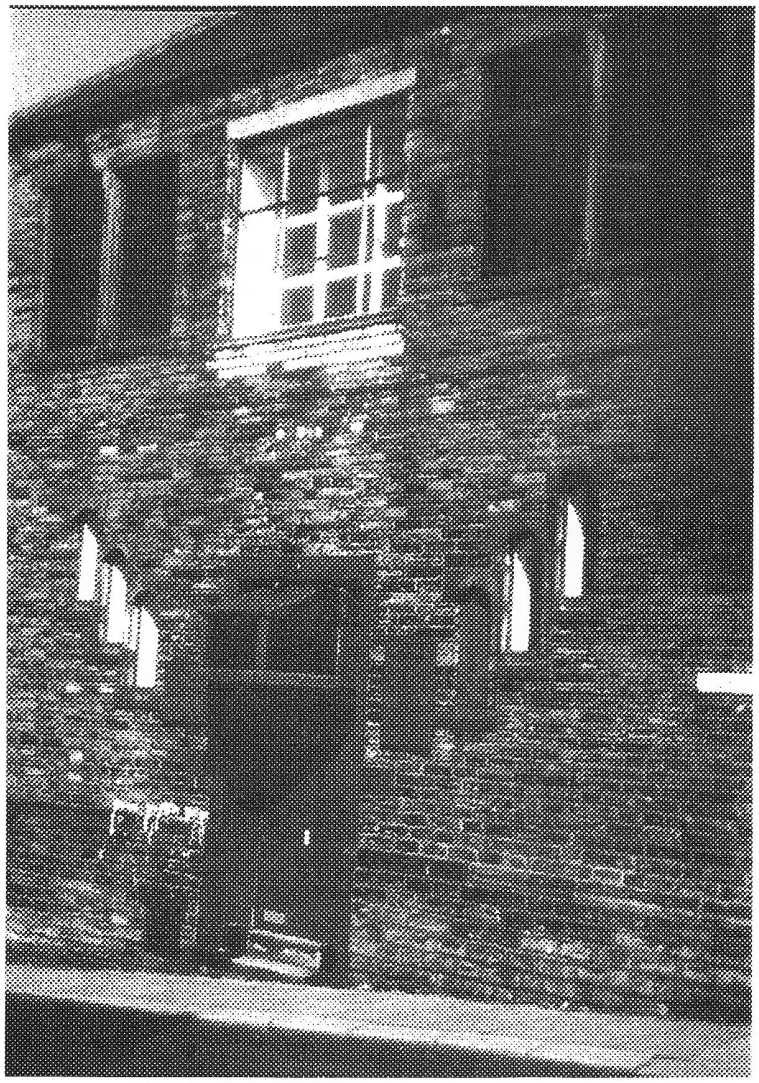


Plate 12 The former Premier today.

Another building was erected about the same time as the Carleton Club by Henry Walker, a furniture dealer. Walker's furniture shop had an entrance on Burnley Road. Above the shop was **Walker's Assembly Rooms** with an entrance round the corner in Hill Street, the opposite side of the road and the opposite end of Hill Street to the **Premier**. It was used mainly as a ballroom. The *Nelson Leader* of 8 March 1912 announced:

Royal Ambulance Review, Social and Dance at Central Buildings Assembly Room, 7pm to 11.45pm, Hindle and Hartley's Band. MCs H Taylor, F Arnold.

It must have become a cinema some time in 1912. On 10 November 1912 Mr. J Parker M.P. gave a speech at the **Star**

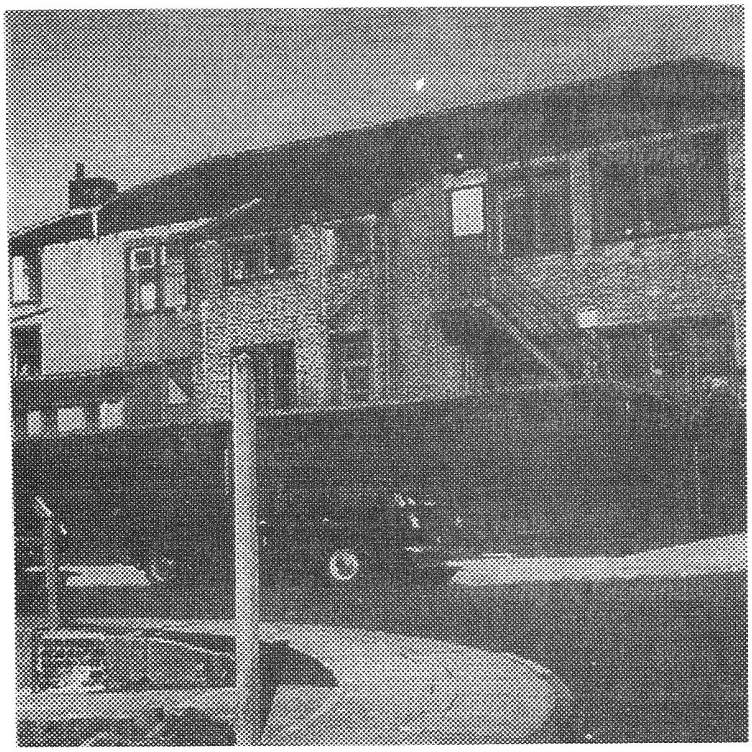


Plate 13 Another aspect of the Premier as it is today

Picture Hall on the abolition of poverty. The *Burnley Directory* for 1911 lists the **Assembly Hall**, Prop. Henry Walker. The *Directory* for 1914 lists the **Central Picture Hall**, Prop. Henry Walker. I have not seen any newspaper advertisements for films at this hall. Song slides seem to have been a feature there. I was told that the boy who had a dream about the pit disaster had made a personal appearance when 'Don't Go Down the Mine' was shown. The local lads gave the owner a hard time. They sometimes gave a tram ticket to be torn in two instead of an admission ticket. Or they gave a silver threepenny bit and swore it was a sixpence, getting three pence change. The man who ran the cinema was known as Jinny. The boys would sing, 'The moon shines bright on Jinny's red nose, his wife is crying, his dog is dying,' to the tune of 'Red Wing'.

Plate 14 The Star/Central today

The first purpose-built cinema in the town opened on 15 July 1915. It was the **Brierfield Cinema**, Burnley Road. Its length ran up Crabtree Street, the next street to Hill Street. The proprietor was William Smith, whose wife Clara was a niece by marriage of Wiliam Friese-Greene, the inventor of the 'magic box'. The opening programme was 'Tess of the Storm Country' with Mary Pickford. Civic guests attended. The opening night's takings were £16. The projection machine gave trouble on the occasion and the audience was kept in the dark for a while. A three-piece band accompanied the silent films. Prices were 1/-, 9d, 5d, 3d; booked 1/-, 9d, 7d. The interior was rather like that of the **Electric Cinema** at **Harwich** and in the **Portobello Road**, **London**. It had a barrel roof, wide proscenium arch and small stage. There was no balcony. The proprietor or manager could live above the foyer in a flat. There was a shop at either side of the entrance.

I don't know if all three picture houses ever operated together. If they did it was not for very long. The **Central Picture Hall/Star**, went back to dancing probably around the time that Brierfield Cinema opened. There was dancing there in the 1920s, then it became the Central Snooker and Billiard Hall. Around the time of the Second World War it was a small factory, then Brierlux Upholstery Works, then John's Do it Yourself shop.

The **Cinema** must have proved strong competition for the **Premier** which changed hands frequently in the 1920s. F Cooper was manager at the Premier in 1920. In January 1924 the manager was Hal Waddington. Week commencing 21 January 1924, 'Moriarty' (Monday - Wednesday', 'Dick Turpin Rides to York', (Thursday - Saturday). The *Nelson Leader* of 20 February 1925 reported:

> *At the Burnley Bankruptcy Court on Tuesday, Ralph Taylor, 1 Ebor Street, Burnley, loom overlooker, and his son, John Herbert Taylor, of the same address, carrying on business in co-partnership at the Premier Cinema House, Brierfield, as cinematograph film exhibitors, returned their joint liabilities as £385 8s 1d and a deficiency of £350.8s.1d. They attributed their failure to 'loss in the picture house'. Debtors in their preliminary examination stated that in April they rented the Premier Cinema House in Brierfield in partnership, trading as R and J H Taylor. Ralph Taylor had between £60 and £70 capital, his son having no capital. They got two projection machines on hire, and also put in a few electric lights. The place did not pay and they gave up business on 27 December last. The joint statement of affairs disclosed 32 unsecured debts, nine, amounting to £250 13s 9d, being over £10 each. The debtor, Ralph Taylor, was 48 years of age, and from March 1922 to February 1924, he and his wife had a grocery and mixed business in Burnley, but sold it in January 1924. Except for this and the partnership business he had always been a loom overlooker. The son, John Herbert Taylor, was 22 years of age and was a cinema operator. His wife owned a four-valve wireless set worth about £15, obtained out of her earnings when working in a restaurant. The examination was adjourned.*

My parents used to visit the **Premier**. On one occasion a tax inspector paid a visit and asked to see my parents' tickets. They did not have the tax stamps on them and the then owner was prosecuted. My father had to attend the court as a witness, somewhat reluctantly as they had a friendly relationship with the manager. The illness of his wife was the excuse given by the owner for not putting the stamps on. I don't know if it was Mr Taylor or someone else.

For the week commencing 23 February 1925 there was a special presentation for four days only of 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame' at the Brierfield Cinema.

At the Premier for the week commencing 7 September 1925 Captain Evans Davy presented the Humeresks; prices 4d, 6d, 9d and 1/-. Week commencing 14

September, 'Art and Romance: a Cabaret Carnival', Dudley Dawson, ventriloquist; Doris Alma, entertainer; Billy Franklin and his £800 violin; Sylvia Dear, comedienne and dancer; Vic Lesley; George Carpenter, pianist; Jeff Mairie, comedian; the Dancing Ks; 7.45pm Monday - Friday; 6.30pm and 8.45pm Saturday. 28 September and week, Rainbows' Concert Party. 3 October and week, Tit Bits Concert Party.

The **Premier** seems to have gone over to being a concert-party theatre from 1925. I have no record of any films being shown there afterwards. The **Brierfield Cinema** had a few live acts to supplement the films around this time. For the week beginning 3 October it screened 'In a Monastery Garden' with Harry Smith of the Colne and Nelson Operatic Society singing the songs. Week commencing 2 November, Monday - Wednesday, the Brierfield Jazz Band, with over 30 instruments, appeared in addition to the picture programme, Matheson Lang in 'White Slippers', a story of sea and treasure. There was a Go as you Please competition at the **Cinema** from 14 December for the week.

In January 1926 the popular Rainbows' Concert Party were at the **Premier**. In the week commencing 28 October 1927 the Super-optomists appeared at the **Premier** with *Ten real star artistes.* On 25 November 1927 there was a ladies' long-hair competition for sixteen to seventy year olds. *Bobbed, shingled and Eton cropped banned.*

The **Premier** seems to have faded away before the talkie era. In the 1930s the ILP used the hall, and it was popular for dancing. The locally-famous Armageddon Dance Band played there. This came to an end with the second world war. It opened as the Briar Ballroom on 13 December 1946 run by the club of which it was a part. The Grosvenor Band of Burnley played for 50/50 dancing on Fridays, modern ballroom on Saturdays and Gay 90s on Mondays. Lew Askew took over the running of the Briar on 13 March 1948. Lew Askew and his band, with Art Jackson, played for modern ballroom dancing every Saturday. After about two years it became Veevers' Sports Club. Messrs Veevers were cotton manufacturers in Brierfield. Then on Friday, 27 March 1953 it became the New Briar Ballroom run by Eric W Higgins and Ivy Mitchell, with Freddie Lancaster and his Music Makers. They ran the New Briar for many years.

The *Nelson Leader* of 25 January 1929 had a photograph of the 'Toy Town Artillery' - local girls *who have achieved success this week at the **Brierfield Cinema** in 'Hello Brierfield'.* There was a Sacred Concert at the Brierfield Cinema on 16 February 1930 by the Brierfield Brass Band. Three changes took place at the **Cinema**, all at about the same time. The Smith family relinquished control and E Peacock became the lessee. It became the **New Star Cinema**. Western Electric sound system was installed. It re-opened on Monday 18 January 1932 with 'Dance Fools Dance', MGM, Joan Crawford. The story with a Chicago locale principally concerned the underworld and newspaper life of the metropolis. Evening prices 5d, 7d, 9d. Children 3d, 5d. Matinée 5d, children 1d.

Mr.Peacock was not running the **New Star** for long. I believe the Smith family took over its running again for a few years. Just before the second world war Albert Warburton took over the New Star. I visited it regularly as a child in his time. It was well run. Programmes changed on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Prices were 1/-, 9d, 7d. The largest block of seats were blue plush (9d). About six rows of reddish brown seats at the back were 1/-; these included a few double seats. At the front there were wooden tip-up seats at 7d. Most people sat in the blue seats, and children usually took the wooden seats. The back (best) seats were used by courting couples. The New Star showed Universal News. I remember an advertisement they showed for ice cream, with the tubs moving along and being filled to the tune of 'The Grasshopper's Dance'.

There were no Sunday cinemas in our area. Mr. Warburton allowed the cinema to be used for charity concerts on Sundays, which happened occasionally. It had a decent stage. Only once or twice can I remember a live act along with the films. One was a counting dog. The popular film 'Mrs Miniver' was shown for three days, Monday -Wednesday. I went with my parents and there were only 7d seats available. We were shown three seats but one was missing! 'Lorna Doone', starring Victoria Hopper, was shown on the Thursday, for one day only.

The New Star was under the personal management of Mr. Warburton until he acquired the **Empire, St Anne's**. He ran the two cinemas as West Coast Theatres Ltd. A Mr Fox became manager of the New Star from July 1948. Some years later Mr Warburton took his own life at the Empire, St. Anne's. It was believed that he had health worries. The New Star closed about 1956. After a few weeks Kenneth Coulthurst, a Burnley projectionist, took it over. He only ran it for a few months before getting into financial difficulties. It closed in March 1957. A year later Frank Taylor bought it. He received a note through his door, 'Dear Mr Cinema Man, please, please start up our cinema again'. There were 650 seats at this time. On Friday 23 May the **New Star** was re-opened by Taylor and Cowell. The re-opening ceremony was performed by Councillor H Twist, Chairman of the Brierfield UDC. The re-opening film was 'The Admirable Crichton'. This proved to be a false dawn and the New Star finally closed on Saturday 24 January 1959, the last film being Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra in 'Anchors Aweigh'.

After considerable internal alteration it re-opened as the Star Sports Stadium for roller skating and five-a-side football, in April 1959. Ken Stanley, who had a hall in Burnley for table tennis, was in charge. This too proved to be a short-lived venture. On Sunday 21 July 1961 it opened as the Rockin' Shoe Disco. This did not last even six months. On Friday 15 December 1961 it became the 77 Club with cabaret and gambling facilities. This was very successful for a time and many well-known entertainers appeared there. Changes to the gambling laws later made it less viable and in November 1967 it closed.

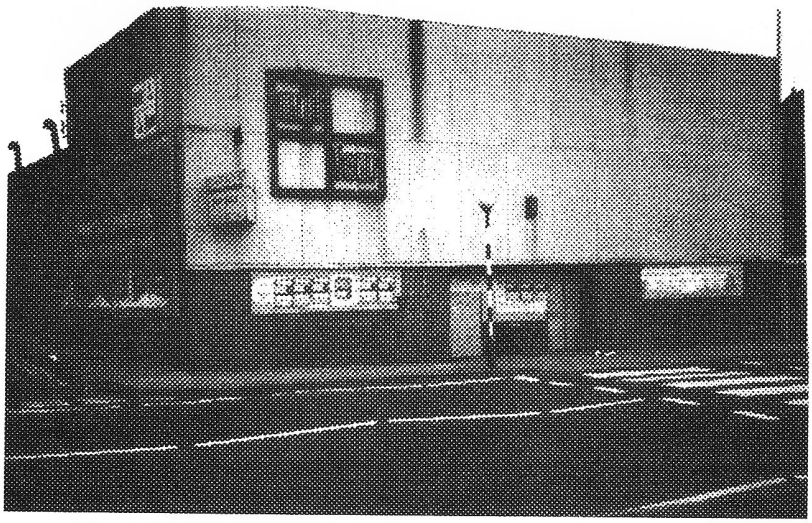


Plate 15 The Unit 4/New Star/Star/Brierfield Cinema as it is today

Brian Tattersall had it converted to four small cinemas and it opened as **Unit Four Cinemas** on 14 July 1969: U1, 'The Machine'; U2,'The Robe'; U3, 'Random Harvest'; U4, 'The Man from Laramie'. It was the first of the Unit Four Circuit. As the Unit Four, Brierfield's cinema was to run after all the Nelson, Colne and Burnley cinemas.

When Brian Tattersall died, brother David took over the running of Unit Four. In 1989 the chain was taken over by the Apollo group. After they opened a new nine-screen multiplex in Burnley on 30 May 1997, they closed Brierfield Unit Four. The last films were shown in July 1997: 'Batman and Robin', 'The Fifth Element', 'Beavis and Butthead in America', and 'Con Air'.

Barrowford

Barrowford was an Urban District with a population of around 5,000. It had only one cinema. The **Empire Picture Palace**, Nora Street, opened in 1913. W Taylor was the managing director. It was supplied with electricity taken from the tramway overhead wires in January 1914. In November 1914 variety acts were used to supplement films. In 1922 it was known as the **Palace Pictures** with J B Norton as manager. In 1924 it was the **Empire**; 'Dr Mabusi' was among the attractions in January. For the week commencing 30 March 1925, Joslyn Cooper and Milton Henri presented 'Speed' (a variety show) and the theatre was described as 'the popular variety house'. There was a special engagement of Parson's Popular Homily from 9 to 18 July 1925.

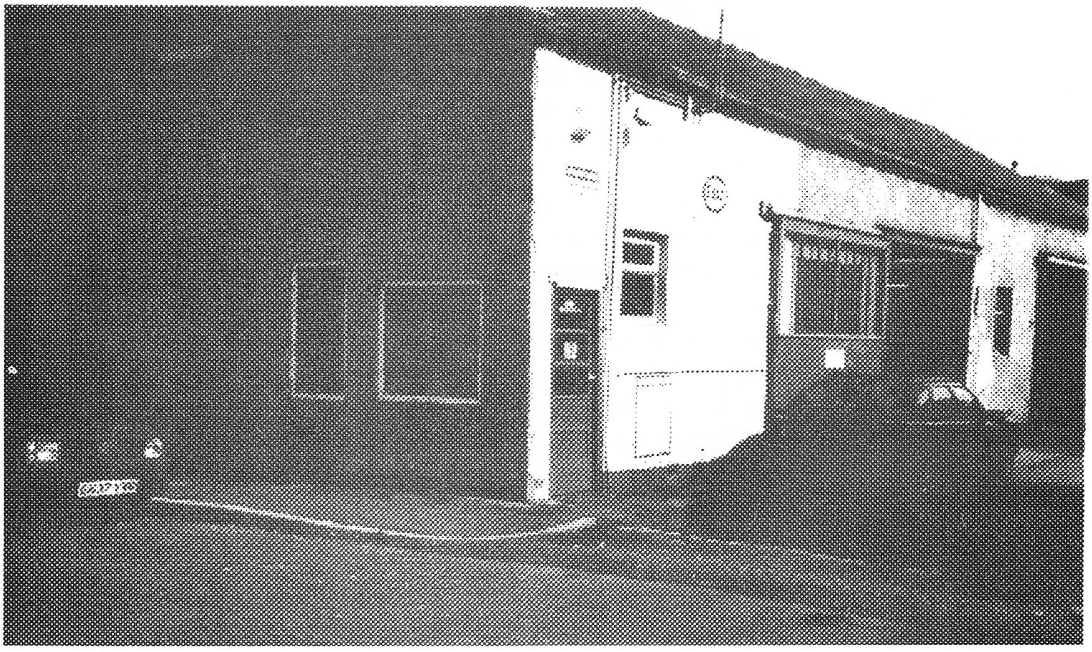


Plate 16 The former Barrowford Empire showing very little sign of its past, with the façade entirely altered.

On Saturday 1 August 1925 the **Empire** re-opened for one night for the Philharmonic Concert Party. For the week commencing Monday 3 August 1925 there was a 'Go as you Please' competition with £10 prizes. The Rainbows Concert Party were there in May 1926. In February 1927 Betty V Gableton was the lessee with Cyril Bell as resident manager, Douglas Milton as general manager, and Herbert Holgate as assistant manager. There was a grand re-opening on 7 March 1927 with a special engagement - Carr-U-Lifta and full variety company of seven acts. In March 1928 it was under the personal management of Charles Gaston, a former manager of the **Alhambra**, **Nelson**.

In April 1930 it was under new management yet again, with W Hargreaves as lessee and Wilson Stobbart as general manager. The *Nelson Leader* of 19 May 1933 reported an application by William Render, professional music-hall artist for a music and dancing licence for the **Empire Palace**. He intended to run it for concert parties and small variety shows. *It had latterly been run as an athletics club.* That was the last mention in the local paper of the Empire Palace as a place of entertainment. Being only about a mile from the centre of Nelson with its larger cinemas and theatres, the competition must have been too strong for the little Empire Palace. It became the Empire Garage and later the Popular Garage.

Trawden

Trawden, with a population of abour 1500, was the smallest Urban District in Lancashire. It never had a regular cinema. During the second world war film shows were sometimes put on at the St John's Amblance Hall, Trawden, on Thursday evenings. Will Fyffe in 'Old Bob' was one of the films shown.

Colne

Colne is an ancient market town which became a borough in the late nineteenth century. Its population reached about 25,000 at its peak. Throughout the nineteenth century, the eighteenth century **Cloth Hall** was used for balls, theatricals, concerts, etc but it was never a cinema. In the 1860s a corrugated iron building was erected in St John Street as an institution of improvement and self-education. Robert Wildman was the man responsible for its being built. It became known as the Iron School. About 1890 it became a Temperance Hall.

In 1881, Robert Foulds built a theatre in Ivegate not far from the ancient parish church. It was called the **Free Trade Hall**. W J Lindley was the architect, and it opened on 5 December 1881 with Colne Choral Society's performance of 'The Messiah'. The Grand Opening was on 10 December with the Milton Rays appearing for a week. It cost £3,000 to build. After improvements by the Burnley architect Thomas Bell, it re-opened as the **Theatre Royal** on 23 January 1893. The lessee and manager was John Barker who was proprietor of the **Grand Theatre, Nelson**.

The **New Victoria Assembly Rooms** in Market Street were designed and built by Councillor Holgate who also opened it. The large hall was used mainly as a ballroom. It had polished oak floors. It also had large dressing and retiring rooms. There was a lesser hall underneath.

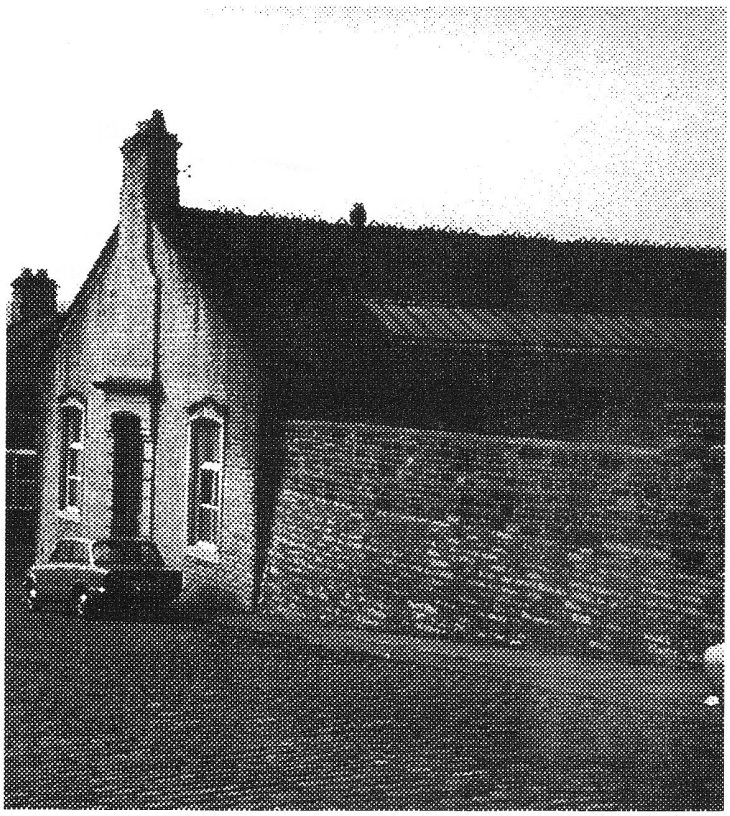


Plate 17 The former Central Hall, Colne

The **Municipal Hall** in Albert Road accommodated 1,400 persons when it was built in 1902. It cost £12,000 including the cost of the land and furnishing. The Municipal Technical School was built behind it and there was direct communication between them. The architects were Messrs Woodhouse and Willoughby of Manchester. It was a multi-purpose hall with a balcony, stage, dressing rooms, and a flat floor for dancing and exhibitions. It became a venue for the travelling film exhibitors. Ralph Pringle's North American Animated Picture Co. were there for two weeks commencing Monday 11 March 1907

with the Chronograph Singing Pictures.

> *They sing, talk, laugh, and dance. The nearest approach to actual life devised by man. Thousands of picture creations: Niagara Falls, Cape to Cairo Railway, Indians' Revenge. Largest exhibition in the world. Smart Vaudeville Co. Nightly at 8. Matinée Saturday at 3. Prices 1/6, 1s, 6d, 3d Limited.*

The **Central Hall**, Colne Lane, was built by Joshua Duckworth, who had a printing works nearby, in 1905. It is believed to be the first purpose-built cinema in the North of England. The first payment in connection with the hall was for 16s 4d on 10 December 1904. The largest payment was £200 on 20 May 1905. (From Joshua Duckworth's account book.) The opening date is uncertain. The first programme mentioned in the *Colne and Nelson Times* was for the week commencing 25 February 1907:

Central Hall, Colne Lane, Colne

Every night at 7.45. Grand Exhibition of the Premier Electric Animated Pictures. Shown by the 'Chrono', the King of Cinematographs. Programme for week commencing February 25th 1907 - a magnificent picture in Nine Acts

'The Curfew Must Not Ring Tonight'

Principal characters: Basil Underwood, the hero, a Royalist seeking safety from the Roundheads in his sweetheart's house; Bessie, Basil Underwood's sweetheart, the heroine; Oliver Cromwell, the people's champion, leader of the Roundheads; the Old Sexton, whose duty is to toll the curfew.

Scene 1, the Hunted Royalist; scene 2, Captured; Scene 3, Ordered to be shot at the sound of the curfew; Scene 4, The hour of the curfew, Waiting for death; scene 5, Bessie pleads with the Sexton; scene 6, Bessie's heroism.'Curfew must not ring tonight'; scene 7, the deaf old sexton; scene 8, Why does the curfew not ring? scene 9, Bessie's heroism rewarded.

Grand old Fairy Pantomime, 'Beauty and the Beast'. This picture equals the real pantomime in many respects, and should not be missed.

'The Night of the Party', a humorous film - full of furious laughter.

Popular prices: Balcony 1s, Chairs 6d, Body of hall 4d.

Doors open 7.15. Commence 7.45. Half price to all seats 9 o'clock.

A grand entertainment for children, Wednesdays at 5, Saturdays at 3.

Reduced prices, 1d, 2d, 3d.

The Duckworths were prominent Wesleyan Methodists and the Central Hall looks like a chapel. Mr. Duckworth gave magic lantern shows before becoming a cinematograph pioneer. In their advertisement they said:

> *Our object is to provide an entertainment free from any objectionable feature, and to which all members of the family may safely be brought. Our aims - to interest, to elevate, to amuse.*

The programme for the second week was 'Christ Amongst Men', 'Scenes in Switzerland', 'A Visit to the London Zoological Gardens', 'My Pal Curly', 'Saturday's Wages', 'The Sweep's Revenge', 'The Unlucky Birthday Umbrella', and 'The American Topsy Turvy or Leap Frog Railway'. The programme lasted above two hours. Good houses were recorded.

The *Colne and Nelson Times* of 22 March 1907 had a report about a gale. A cinematograph exhibition at Colne Fair was levelled by it. The same paper had an advertisement:

Novelty to Colne. The first visit of the Great Paris Modern Theatre Co. Five nights only commencing 25 March 1907. Every night at 8. Saturday matinée 3pm. Positively closing Saturday 30 March. Unique presentation of Coloured Animated Pictures. Absolutely steady living pictures. No flickering. Music by electricity. Own improvement. The cost of our first programme being not less than £2,000. 'Wonders of the Deep', 'The Thousand and One Nights', 'London and Paris'. 2/-, 1/6, 9d, 6d, and 3d. Children half price except 3d seats. No extra charge for booking. The Paris Modern Theatre have no competition. Opposition impossible. Proprietor Gunnar Gooes. Managing Director, Gustav Gooes.

The show was at the **Municipal Hall**.

For two weeks only commencing 14 October 1907 the Municipal Hall had a return visit of the Excelsior Animated Pictures:

After 16 successful weeks at the ***Palace Theatre, New Brighton****. Everything entirely new. We shall have the pleasure of placing before you a programme of exceptional merit, surpassing all previous records. The greatest programme ever placed before you. Don't fail to pay us a visit. Acknowledged by all to be the best. We challenge the world. The acme of perfection. Hundreds of new pictures. Be your own judge. Supported by our old friends Tiny and Mite with new songs and dances. George Berry with beautifully illustrated songs. Don't forget opening night Monday 14 October 1907. Popular prices. 1/6, 1/-, 6d, 3d. Matinée Saturday at 3pm.*

In 1909 A O Andrews opened the **Industry Hall** in **Dewsbury**, Later the same year, on 15 November, Andrews Pictures took over the **Victoria Hall** in Colne. 'Matthew's Spree', 'Poor Mother', and 'Salvador' were the films shown. For the week commencing 22 November 1909:

New American Song Scenes. Illustrated vocally by first class concert artistes. Special music and unique effects. The hall is now thoroughly heated throughout, making it the most comfortable place of entertainment in town.

The **Municipal Hall** was the venue when Poole's *New 1910-11 Myriorama and entertainers* came to Colne for six nights and a matinée in the week commencing 30 January 1911. They brought 'Our Indian Empire' and Smoses, Egyptian man of mystery.

The *Colne and Nelson Times* of 4 August 1911 reported:

Scott-Brown, chief cinematographer for Andrews Pictures Ltd, has taken a series of pictures from Mr Barber's Valkyrie monoplane. Mr. Brown invented a special camera for making photographic maps.

Meanwhile the **Theatre Royal** had continued to present live entertainment - operas, musicals, plays and variety. Gerald Harding was the last manager of the Theatre Royal before it became the **King's Theatre** on 7 August 1911, *renovated, re-decorated, and considerably improved in appearance.* The managing director of the new regime was C Hamilton Baines and the resident manager was A V Alton. Shows were twice nightly at 7pm and 9pm. The opening programme was provided by Walter Steele and his company in 'A Fast Life' (Monday - Wednesday) and 'Shadows of a Great City' (Thursday - Saturday). Prices were: stalls 1/-, centre circle 9d, balcony 6d, pit stalls 4d, pit 2d, or, for reserved seats, stalls 1/3, centre circle 1/-, balcony 9d, pit stalls 6d, pit 3d.

Norman Russell was manager for **Andrews Pictures** in February 1912. The **Parochial Hall** was opened as a picture house in April 1912 with Peter Beardsworth as manager. The Parochial Hall is in the basement of Sacred Heart R.C. Church in

Queen Street. Nothing more is known about this cinema but it was probably a short-lived venture. In May 1912 Mont Gilpin was resident manager for **Andrews Pictures**. There was a partial benefit for Mr. and Mrs Herbert Hartley one Thursday (first house) at the **Victoria Hall**.

The *Colne and Nelson Times* for 8 March 1912 advertised:

> ***Municipal Hall*** *Pictures. Mr B Crossley begs to announce to the public that he has taken the Public Municipal Hall for a season. And that all the latest and newest pictures of the best American and Continental makers will be shown. Every care will be taken to make this the best show that has been opened to the public of Colne. Today and Saturday. Come and see the greatest artiste the world has ever seen, Little Hettie. The highest salaried artiste the world has ever seen. The highest salaried artiste for her age in the world. The Little Widow. Arson at Sea. Actor in a new role. Sarang the Special, and many other fine things including Mr Ted Farrer in his latest songs. 11 March 'Sergeant White's Peril'. See the faithful horse gallop. 'At the Hour of Three', an entirely new production by the Clarendon Co. 'An Indian Runner's Romance', splendid Indian drama by the American Bio Co. 'The Glass Coffin', a magnificent drama full of artistic merit, and plenty of dramatic situations. 2,500 feet long.*

The Colne Opera Co gave 'Maritana' for the week commencing 25 March at the **King's Theatre**. At **Andrews' Victoria Hall**, for the week commencing 28 October 1912: *The Lieutenant's last fight, 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'. This picture is entirely new to Colne. American, British, Continental comedy. Prices 2d, 4d, 6d, reserved 9d.*

In December 1911 there was a court case about the **King's Theatre**. The plaintiff was Gerald Harding and the defendant was Cecil Hamilton Baines. The dispute was about goods sold in connection with the transfer of the theatre, to the value of £197.6s.6d. Baines was the managing director of Lancashire Theatres Ltd which had taken over the King's. The theatre changed hands again in March 1912 and became the **King's Theatre of Varieties and Picturedrome**, owned by a company of the same name. It was managed by E R Moore. Pictures and variety was their policy with films changed twice weekly on Monday and Thursday. Around the same time, Leslie Nolan became manager at the **Victoria Hall**. *An eloquent lecturer, he makes the pictures live.* He introduced afternoon teas at Tuesday matinées to all 4d and 6d ticket holders. They showed the Burnley v Derby County football match of the previous Saturday at the Victoria Hall.

New competition arrived about 1913 when the old Iron School, later Temperance Hall, in St John Streeet became the **Alhambra Picture Palace**. Its exact opening date is uncertain. The first advertisement in the *Colne and Nelson Times* is for the week commencing 5 May 1913:

> *Better than ever. Another star week. 'The Sacrifice', 'The Surprise Packet', 'Life of the Heron', 'She Wanted a Boarder', 'The Old Reporter'. Also pleasing engagement of J W Kay the old favourite descriptive and versatile vocalist. Prices 6d, 4d, 3d, 2d. All people over fifty free to Tuesday matinées.*

This was obviously not the first programme. Legend has it that the **Alhambra** opened before the seats were installed, as they had not arrived in time. Another story tells of a man from Trawden who saw his first and last films at the Alhambra. One of the films showed a train apparently heading for the auditorium. The man sprang from his seat and ran all the way back to Trawden. He swore never to go to the pictures again as it was too dangerous.

In 1914 a new theatre was built in New Market Street by George Fort, on his own land. It was designed and built under the supervision of Councillor R S Pilling. Stone came from Law Quarry. Electric lighting was installed. The proscenium and

circle front were specially designed and modelled by W H Horn Ltd, of Idle, Bradford. They were gold medallists in fibrous plaster design. Other contractors included Messrs E Payne and Sons, Colne, J Riddiough and Co, Colne (joiners), Charles Cook, Colne (plumbing and heating), E Haworth and Sons, Colne (plastering), Ormerod and Whittaker, Burnley (slating), Hartley and Lock, Colne (electricity). The new theatre was called the **Hippodrome**. It had stage and dressing-room facilities, but it offered pictures and variety from the beginning. It seated 1200 (including 300 in the circle). Mr Baker, previously at the **Theatre Royal, Darwen**, was its first manager. He had 16 years experience in theatre management, having worked for Moss' Empires, Stoll Theatres and the Broadhead circuits.

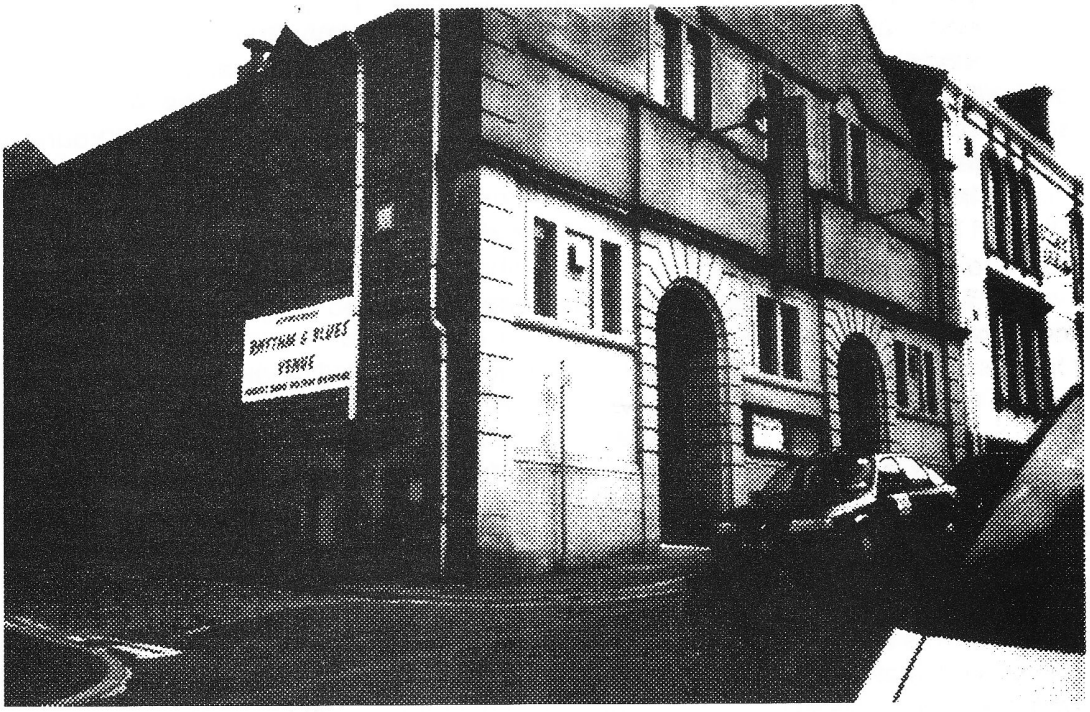


Plate 18 The Colne Hippodrome today as a concert venue

In January 1914 the proprietors of the **Picture House**, **Victoria Hall**, were the Picturedrome Co (Colne) Ltd and the manager was R Windle.

In 1915 the Clarendon Speaking Pictures were in Colne, 'Coming Home'. They consisted of dramatic and humorous poems and dialogues filmed for interpretation by first-class artistes who speak in synchronisation with the picture on the screen. 'Phil Blood's Leap' was another speaking picture. This was probably the last visit by a travelling exhibitor to the **Municipal Hall**.

In 1915 the proprietors of the **King's** were the King's Theatre Co with Thomas Lancaster as manager. In September 1915 it was owned by Varieties (Colne). In 1916 the last advertisement appeared for the **Alhambra**, for the week commencing 1 May. The proprietors were the Alhambra Cinema Co and the manager was R.T. Savage. The exact date when the Alhambra closed is as uncertain as its opening date. No more advertisements appeared after 1916. The old Iron School was said to be in decay in 1927.

For the week commencing 17 January 1919 the **King's** presented a local pantomime, 'Robinson Crusoe', with over sixty performers and seven *gorgeous* scenes. The **Central Cinema** claimed *the finest programme in Lancashire*, 'What Every Woman Knows' and the third episode of 'Glorious Romance' (Monday -

Wednesday), and 'Scrooge', *a charming tale introducing Rupert Julian*, and 'The Lion's Claw' (Thursday - Saturday).

For the week commencing 15 September 1919 John Ridding's Grand Opera Co were at the **King's Theatre** with 'Maritana' (Monday), 'Il Trovatore' (Tuesday), 'Daughter of the Regiment' (Wednesday), 'Faust' (Thursday), 'Lucrecia Borgia' (Friday) and 'The Bohemian Girl' (Saturday). Prices: back pit 7d, gallery and pit 9d, pit stalls and circle 1/7, stalls 2/- (including tax); early doors 7d extra. Booking was at the refreshment bar opposite the **Hippodrome**.

In 1922 the **King's** proprietors were Gill Entertainments with Matthew Gill as managing director. The **Hippodrome** was advertising *Best pictures. Finest orchestra. Most comfort.* The **Central Cinema** programme for the week commencing 30 January 1922 was Monday - Wednesday: *Two star pictures each night. 'Blood Money', an exciting dramatic picture with all star cast. Also 'The Hand of Peril'. Another fine drama full of thrilling episodes. Sherlock Holmes. Another fine story from Conan Doyle.* And from Thursday to Saturday: *Clara Kimball Young in 'The Feast of Life'. Also 'The Vanishing Dagger'. All our usual star pictures.*

In the Colne Times of 2 March 1922 a notice appeared: *The Colne Central Picture Co has no connection with any other company in town. Lessee and manager, Joseph Ferguson.*

The *King's* changed hands yet again and had a grand re-opening on Monday 15 May 1922:

> *Props. Milnrow Empire Ltd. Manager, Ernest Greenwood. Pictures and Variety all week. 6.40. 8.50. Madame Rees and a baritone. Famous Welsh singer. Monday - Wednesday Margeurite Clark, 'Luck in Pawn'; Arline Pretty, 'Hero or Coward'. Thursday - Saturday, Charles Ray, 'Alarm Clock Andy', also 'A Mother's Ordeal'. 5d, 7d, 9d, 1/-.*

The **Victoria Hall** closed from Monday 29 May 1922 for extensive alterations. 'The Education of Nicky' and 'Skirts' were the last films to be shown at the old Victoria Hall. It re-opened as the **Savoy Cinema** on 18 September 1922. The first films at the Savoy were 'Thunderclap' and 'The Mistress of Shenstone'. The lessee and manager was Joseph Ferguson. Instead of being on an upper floor the cinema now occupied the whole building and had a balcony. It was considered Colne's best cinema.

Mr. Ferguson continued as lessee and manager of the Central Cinema. For the week commencing 29 January 1923 the Central was showing an adults only film all week:

> *...the great educational picture, 'Morality'. 'Morality' is a film with a purpose. It is a film that will instruct, that will warn, that will prove a deterrent to our young people at an impressionable moment of their lives. The world's most serious problem. The problem of the social evil. Every adult of both sexes should see it. A thrilling story with a great moral lesson. On Saturday afternoon a special picture for children. Usual serials and full star programme. Gaumont Graphic and Round the Town.*

The **Central Hall** probably closed soon after. The last advertisement in the *Colne Times* was on 9 February 1923. 'Only a Girl' was probably the last film and 17 February the date of its closure. The Central Hall was advertised as for sale or to let from February to May 1927, applications to be made to W A Spencer at the Savoy Cinema.

On Saturday 10 March 1923 there was a fire in the projection box at the **Hippodrome**. 'Dick Turpin's Ride to York' and the serial were destroyed but the fire was confined to the projection box. The management said 'Thank You' to the patrons and the fire brigade. For the week commencing Monday 25 June 1923 the

King's put on comedy, revue, drama, 'The Luck of the Brierleys', and announced that it was the last week under the present management.

On 29 May 1925 the *Colne Times* reported the death of Joshua Duckworth aged 69. He had begun his career in 1870 at the age of fourteen as an apprentice to William Pickles Hartley, the jam maker. Four years later W P Hartley moved to Liverpool. Tempest and Duckworth took over the Colne jam works. Joshua was born at Rimington and his brother Francis wrote the hymn tune 'Rimington' ('Jesus shall reign where e'er the sun...'). He was for forty-five years a trustee of Albert Road Wesleyan Methodist Church, and a Liberal in politics. He was also a life governor of Hartley Hospital:

> *In 1906 he erected one of the first cinema houses in Great Britain. He was one of the first men in Colne to possess a phonograph, and had one of the first motor cars in Colne. He had a keen interest in Natural history, especially microscopic pond life. His son Edgar continued in the cinema business.*

It was around this time that W A Spencer appeared on the Colne entertainment scene. He eventually took control of the **Savoy**, the **Hippodrome** and the **King's**. Rudolph Valentino in 'Blood and Sand' was shown at the King's in August 1929. This was the last advertisement for a while. It was probably the last film shown at the King's. With the coming of Talkies, the **King's** put on live shows. In 1930 Frank H Fortescue's Famous Players presented a series of repertory at the King's. For the week commencing 17 November 1930 they gave 'The Orphan of the Storm' (Monday - Wednesday) and 'Darby and Joan' (Thursday - Saturday). Wally Thomas and Mabel Spencer headed the cast.

Meanwhile the **Savoy** had shown its last silent films, 'After the Verdict' and 'The Glorious Trail', on 15 February 1930. On 17 February the first Talkie, 'The Broadway Melody', with Bessie Love and Anita Page was shown. For the week commencing 19 December 1930 the **Hippodrome** had Billy Riley, *Monarch of the English Concertina*, in addition to the silent films for Monday - Wednesday, 'The Sanfrellas'. Equilibrix on a pedestal performed for the latter part of the week. For the week commencing 26 January 1931 Teddy North's pantomime, Aladdin, was presented at the **Hippodrome**. It was announced that the Hippodrome would open on Monday 20 April 1931 with the latest Western Electric Talkie apparatus and the latest Westone Rubber Sound Screen, the first of its kind in the district: *See and hear then judge for yourselves.* Helen Twelvetrees in 'Her Man' was the first Talkie there.

The **Savoy** advertised that from Monday 25 May 1931 one could: *See and hear the General Electric British Talking Picture Apparatus and Westone Rubber Sound Screen.*

The **King's Theatre** faded away rather than died. For the week commencing 7 January 1935: *Parsons' Productions Present 'Cinderella', George Parsons as Baron Boozalot, Charlie Parsons as Peter the Page.* On 30 January, for Saturday night only: *On the stage. The Three Radios, Tom O'Halloran, etc*

There were variety programmes again, on the Saturday nights only, on 16 February and 2 March. On the former, the two houses at 6.40pm and 9pm had Robinson and Macken, and Phyllis and Andy Shields. On 16 March the Hippodrome had Clown Decor's Miniature Circus for the children's matinée. The company was included in the variety bill at the King's the same evening. And so it continued, with variety at the King's on Saturday evenings only.

Edgar Duckworth, councillor for Horsfield ward and proprietor of the Duckworth Cinema Circuit, was made a magistrate in March 1935.

Also in March the following advertisement appeared in the *Colne Times*:

Knowing that many of our patrons enjoy Topical, Interest, Travel and Educational films, we have made arrangements to show such pictures at certain performances which we shall call Family Nights. Patrons will know that on those evenings they can see Topical, Interest, Travel or Educational short films. Our first Family Night will be on Friday 5 April, and will be advertised in local papers and posters in the usual way.

Another advertisement, in the *Colne Times* of 19 April 1935 said:

***Savoy** Cinema, Colne. Colne leads the way with the world's first Dictomatic Picture. A revolution in talking pictures, and at enormous expense, Colne has secured the first nights in East Lancashire. The greatest novelty the screen has yet shown. The stage and screen united for the first time. What's a Dictomatic Picture? Can artists on the screen talk to artists on the stage? Can artists on the stage talk to artists on the screen? See and hear them talk to each other. Forty minutes of sensational laughter. How is it done? And it is an All British Invention. Nelson Keys, Dave Barnaby, Hilda Moreno and their dog are on the screen, and they talk to the artist on the stage. See the dog bark on the screen to catch the lump of sugar when the artist on the stage throws one. Laughter from start to finish. The date will be announced next week.*

The date announced was for the week commencing 29 April 1935 - but at the **Hippodrome**, not the **Savoy**. I have not seen any mention of Dictomatic Pictures anywhere else in my researches.

King's Theatre, Saturday night only (19 October 1935), at 6.40pm and 9pm:

Grand re-opening attraction. The great stage attraction, the Novelties. Yorkshire's premier entertainers in their smart musical comedy show, also Ferdi Fosco, the leading piano accordionist and his BBC accordion band. Hear them on the wireless Friday 18 October (Leeds Studio). Saturday 26 October, Variety at King's. Week commencing 4 November. All week at the King's. Fred E Rayne presents the famous broadcasting show, the North Regional Follies, direct from their season's success at Morecambe - Blackpool - Bridlington. 4d, 6d, 9d, 1/-, 3d extra reserved.

After that it was back to Saturday evenings only. On 28 December it was Cosgrove and Weston (*the famous BBC boys)*, the Jewel sisters, Hylda Warren, *the popular comedy duo* Elva Ledson and Mark Sheridan (son of the late Mark Sheridan). On Saturday 18 January 1936 the variety bill at the King's included the *special return visit* of the Seven Novelties, Cliff Rhodes, Bob Ellis, Albert Strickland, the Land Bros and the *Premier Appearance* of Mademoiselle Veronic, *the girl with the £5,000 legs. The world's champion high kicker.* On Friday and Saturday 21 and 22 February: *Special return visit of Fred E Rayne and his North Regional Follies, the Three Lagoons, Flo Vesta, Rex Lorraine, and Sylvia Hilton.*

The **King's Theatre** closed on 18 April 1936. I was told it was condemned. The rear wall was never vertical; it always had a bulge.

An advertisement on 2 October 1936: ***Savoy Cinema**. Watch this cinema for superb improvements and sensational announcements.* There was a change in the style of the advertisements for the **Savoy** and the **Hippodrome** the following week. Harry Buxton's Theatre Circuit had taken them over from Mr Spencer. 13 November 1936:

***Hippodrome** Theatre. In search of Radio Talent. After last Friday's enormous success, Harry Buxton is continuing with his great variety nights. Valuable prizes including the Harry Buxton Variety Cup. (Fine Film Programme.)*

After lying empty and forlorn for many years, the **King's Theatre** was finally demolished in August 1944. The Savoy and Hippodrome continued and passed from the Buxton Theatre Circuit to the Star Cinema Circuit in 1948.

It was a shock to the people of Colne when it was announced that the **Savoy Cinema** was to close. They had expected the **Hippodrome** to go first. The last films shown at the Savoy were Ted Ray in 'Please Turn Over', and 'The Desperate Man', on Saturday 10 June 1960. Its place was taken by a supermarket.

Edgar Duckworth died on 10 October 1963 aged seventy-five. He was still active in the cinema business. His Duckworth Cinema Circuit had cinemas in Derby (The Black Prince), the Regal, Tipton (Staffs), and Morecambe.

The **Hippodrome** went over to bingo for two nights a week commencing Wednesday and Thursday, 14 and 15 August 1963. After the last film show on 10 June 1964 it went over to full-time bingo except for the children's Saturday matinées. Films were reintroduced *by enormous public demand* on 1 November 1964 with the Beatles in 'Hard Day's Night'. It went back to bingo again after showing '30 Years of Fun' with Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, etc on 8 April 1965. It also had new heating and seating in April 1965.

The Star Circuit passed to EMI. They closed the hall in May 1978 and sold it to three local operatic societies, Nelson St. John's, Colne Operatic Society and the Freelance Society. They carried out alterations and improvements, the members doing much of the work themselves. They also did a great deal of fund raising. It was about ten years before it was ready for their lavish productions of musicals. So the **Pendle Hippodrome** as it now is continues to provide entertainment.

Previously the three operatic societies had put their shows on at the **Municipal Hall**. Ever since it had been built it had been a venue for both amateur and professional stage shows. When Colne became part of Pendle District, the Municipal Hall got a new lease of life. Regular Sunday evening concerts, lectures, wrestling, and film shows on Thursday evenings. It was the last venue in Colne where films were shown. The Municipal Hall was also thoroughly renovated by Pendle Council. Peter Sagar was the first chairman of the Leisure Services Committee.

The Central Hall still stands in industrial use.

Earby

Earby was a small Urban District in the West Riding of Yorkshire before it was merged into the Pendle District of Lancashire. There were three cinemas in Earby. The first one was the **Weavers' Institute**, which was built in 1908. A letter from the West Riding County Council dated 18 April 1910 refers to a cinematograph licence for the Weavers' Institute. The surveyor's report, dated 25 April 1910 states that 'there are two exits both in good positions being at each end of the room. Doors open outwards...no permanent exit signs. There is no permanent enclosure provided, the person supplying the apparatus providing their own. Floor is wooden and will therefore have to be covered in fireproof material under the temporary enclosure. No smoking allowed in the room.' Although I can't give the opening date, it seems likely that the Weavers' Institute began showing films in 1910. There is mention in the minutes of the Earby Urban District Council of a cinematograph licence for the Institute in April 1911 and March 1912. On 10 January 1913 the *Colne Times* advertised:

The Picturedrome open nightly at the Weavers' Institute. The Best Films.

The exact date of its closure is unknown to me, but the opening of the purpose-built **Empire** in 1913 may have hastened its end.

Earby

Competition could have come earlier. A minute of 15 November 1910 contained a surveyor's report on the suitability of premises known as Earby Old Iron School: 'they seem to be under repair and no seating or other arrangements having been made, I am unable to report on the suitability.' It is not mentioned again.

A more serious threat could have come from the proposed electric picture palace together with three lock-up shops underneath, for the Barnoldswick Picture Palace Co. (21.11.1911). It was disapproved. On 5 December 1911 the same company submitted a plan for an electric picture palace to be erected in New Road.

'It was resolved that the plan be approved with a recommendation that two additional exits should be made, one at the centre of the west side and one at the south end of the proposed refreshment bar and that in the event of non-compliance of such recommendations the council will recommend to the County Council not to grant such a licence.' These plans, too, did not materialise.

On 21 January 1913 the plan for the erection of an electric picture palace in School Causeway for F Seigal was approved. The building must have gone up very quickly. It opened on 19 March. A minute of 7 June 1913 states: 'The surveyor read a letter from **the Empire Picture Palace** Co with respect to the repair of a portion of wall near their premises. It was resolved to meet representatives of the company with power to resolve.' It was agreed on 1 July 1913 that the Council would build the portion of the retaining wall and erect four pillars. The company were to provide and fix iron railings.

The *Bioscope* of 7 August 1913 reported:

YORKSHIRE DALES PICTURE SHOW: Earby - The inhabitants of Earby are to have their own Picture Palace in the New Empire Palace erected at the junction of School Lane and Victoria Road, Earby - The hall opened on Monday last (ie 4 August) *arrangements having been made for one nightly show excluding Saturday when there will be two performances. The building is of a very ornate design and the Dalesmen are very proud of their show.*

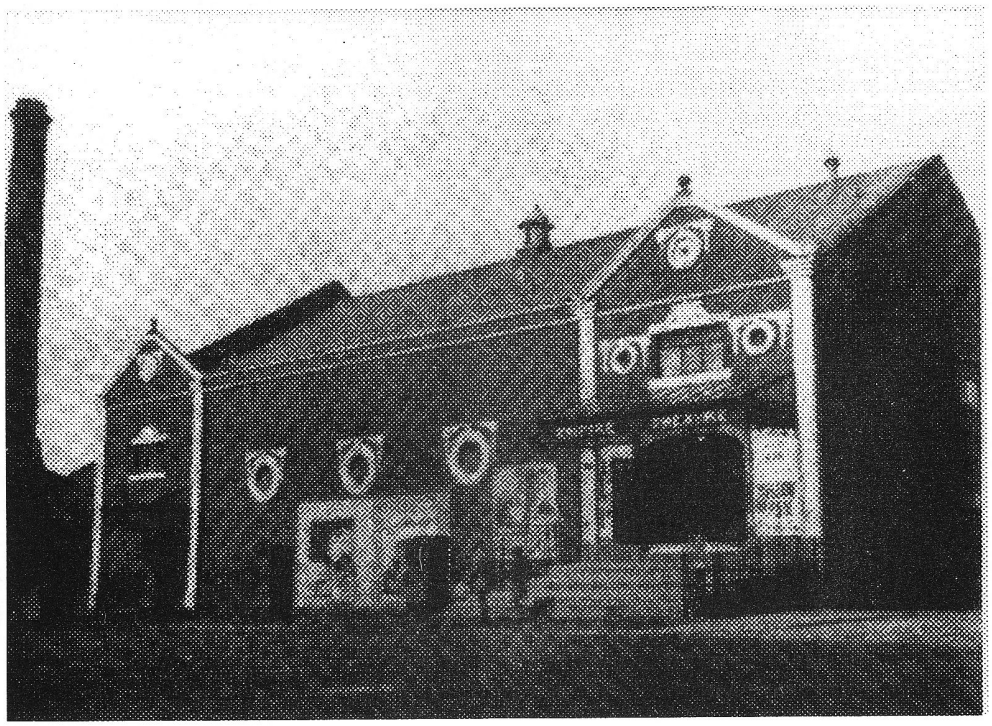
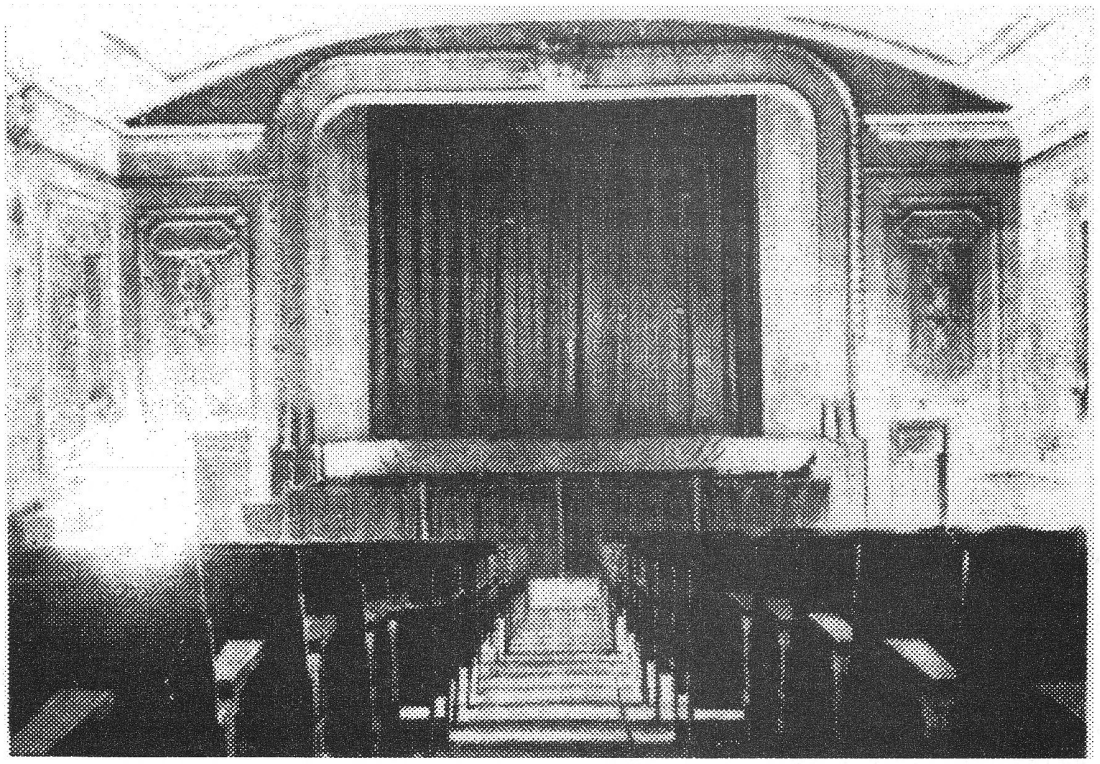
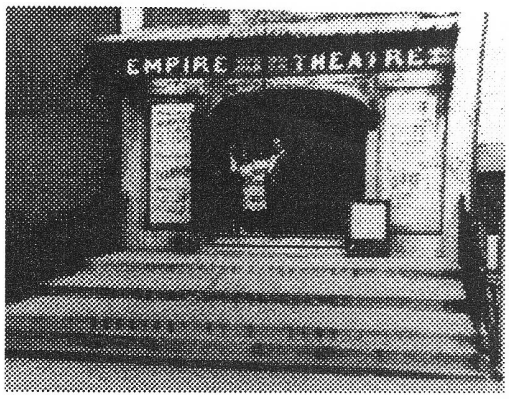


Plate 19 The Earby Empire in early days





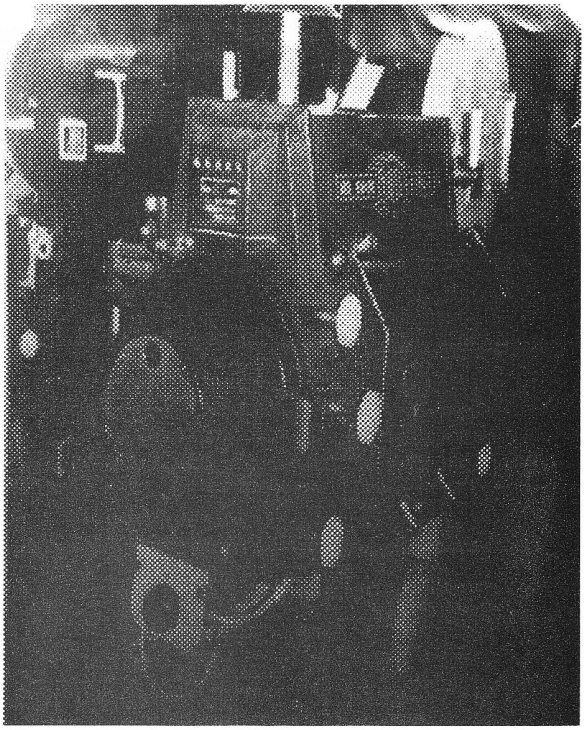
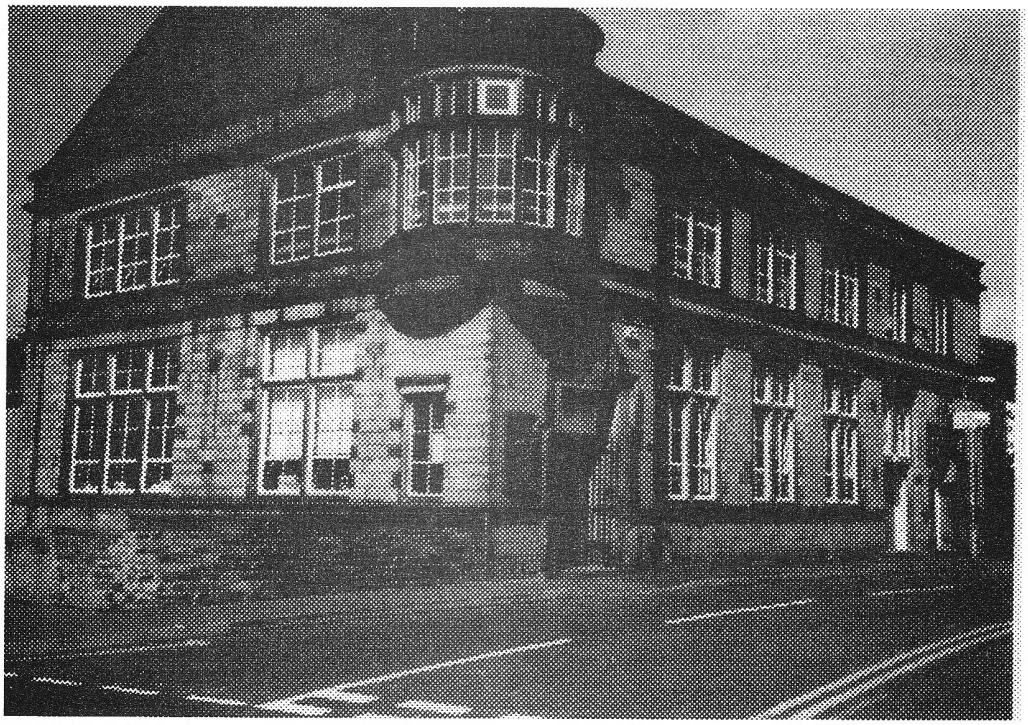


Plate 20 Earby Empire

Top - the interior in 1912
Above - close-up of the entrance
Right - the Gaumont projectors

The **Empire** went over to talkies using the Edibell system about 1930 but changed over to Western Electric within a couple of years. It was then owned by the Earby Cinema Co Ltd and their policy was pictures and variety. The Empire was used by the local amateur operatic society in the 1920s and 1930s and the stage was extended for that purpose. Albert Beaty started work at the Empire as a projectionist and continued to work there, except for service in the RAF during the Second World War, until it closed about 1960. It was put to industrial use and burnt down in 1996 - the centenary year of moving pictures.

The **Coronation Hall** was built in 1911. The large hall on the ground floor, which is now Earby Library, became the Cosy Cinema for a time. It opened after the Empire. The exact date of its opening and closing are unknown to me. During mytime as chairman of the Leisure Services Committee of Pendle Council, we took over a room on the upper floor for a Civic Hall for Earby. This is now the Coronation Hall.



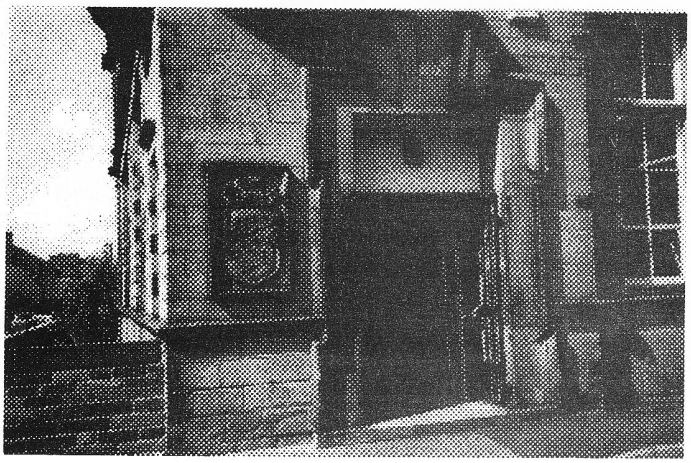


Plate 21 The Cosy Cinema/Coronation Hall, Earby (above) exterior (below) detail of entrance

The **Earby Institute Picturedrome** is listed in the *Kinematograph Year Book* for 1917, giving Frank Garnett as the proprietor and the seating capacity as 350. Earby could well have had three cinemas all operating at the same time for a few years in the days of silent films.

A new factory building was put up on the site of the Empire. Thanks to Geoff Newsholme and the

Earby and District Local History Society, a plaque has been placed on the new building to commemorate the Empire.

Barnoldswick

Barnoldswick was a large Urban District in the former West Riding of Yorkshire. It had a population of about 10,000 when it merged into the Pendle District of Lancashire.

The *Colne and Nelson Times* of 9 July 1909 reported:

> *A company of local gentlemen have purchased a plot of land, part of the Parrock, adjoining Butts Hill, from the Calf Hill Shed Co Ltd, and erected thereon a magnificent building of the most approved design for roller skating. The building is constructed of steel covered with corrugated iron sheeting, and lined with wood, and is lighted and ventilated on the most modern principles. The comfort of patrons has been considered in every detail. The floor is of the finest maple, laid on the latest American principle. Cloakrooms, ladies' and gentlemen's retiring rooms are provided free of charge. Arrangements have been made for light refreshments which will be supplied at reasonable charges. A first class military band will be in attendance, and will discourse popular music. The prices of admission are on a scale which the directors hope will meet the approval of the public, and will be found in the advert. The rink will be opened on Tuesday afternoon next (*13 July 1909) *at 2.30 and at 7.30 .*

This was the **Palace Roller Skating Rink**.

By 1912 the rink was the **Alhambra Theatre**. T Palmer of Leeds was the proprietor. His name is given still in the Kinematograph Year Book of 1920. Admission in 1920 was 2½d. - 6d. The Alhambra was a cinema but also had variety programmes. Charlie Chaplin is said to have appeared there. The **Alhambra** was destroyed by fire on the night of 23/24 April 1924 and never re-built.

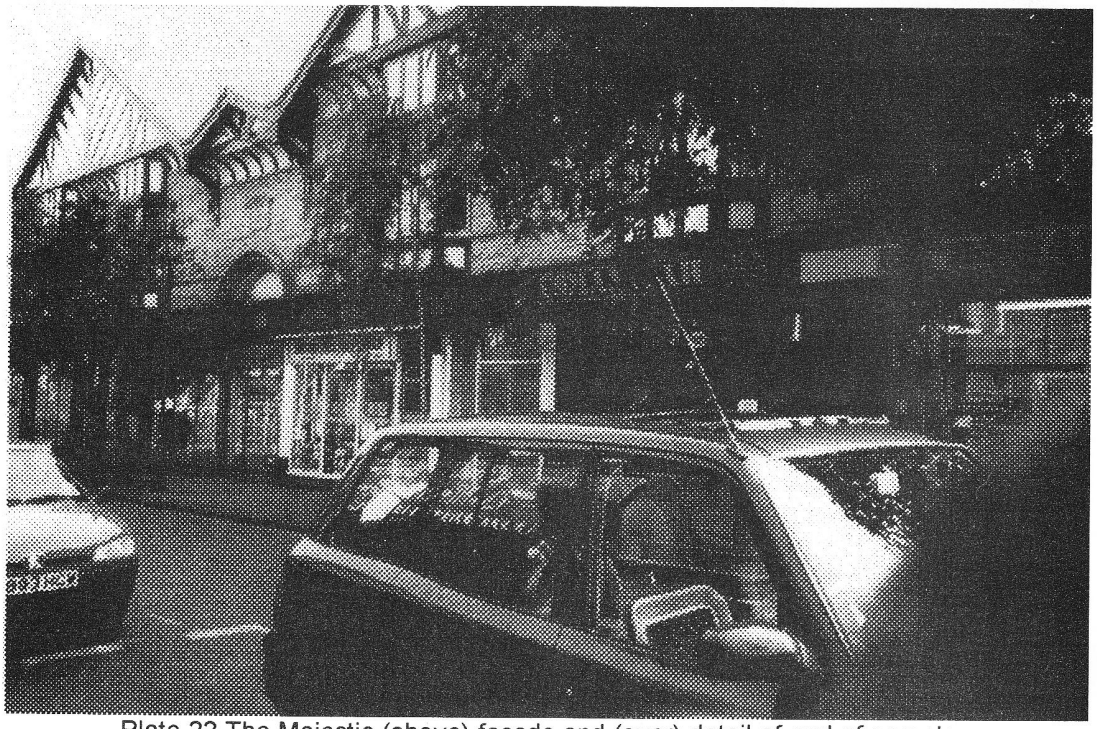
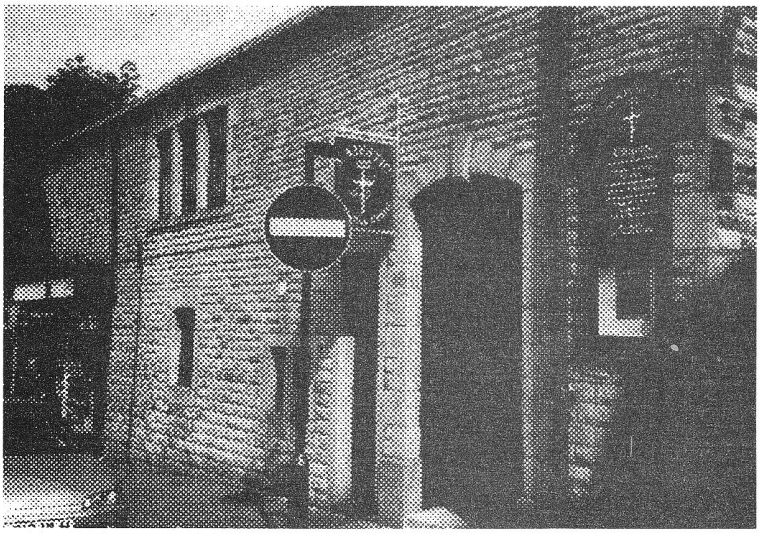


Plate 22 The Majestic (above) façade and (over) detail of end of complex



The **Majestic Picture House** was built by Matthew Hartley in 1914. Many of its features and fittings came from the Majestic ship. The office was constructed from the captain's cabin. There was also a Majestic Ballroom with floor boards of Canadian maple. The ballroom was also used as a market once a week until the 1950s. The resident manager in 1920 was W Watson Brown. The cinema seated 700 and admission was from 3d. to 8d. The first talkie was 'The Jazz Singer' and the Majestic had the Cinephone sound system. The ballroom was gutted by fire in 1942 and it took two years to re-build because of the shortage of Candian maple. The Hartley family owned the Majestic until the 1960s when they sold both cinema and ballroom to a Leeds firm. The Majestic closed in 1980 and the ballroom and cinema have been demolished but the frontage with shops remains.

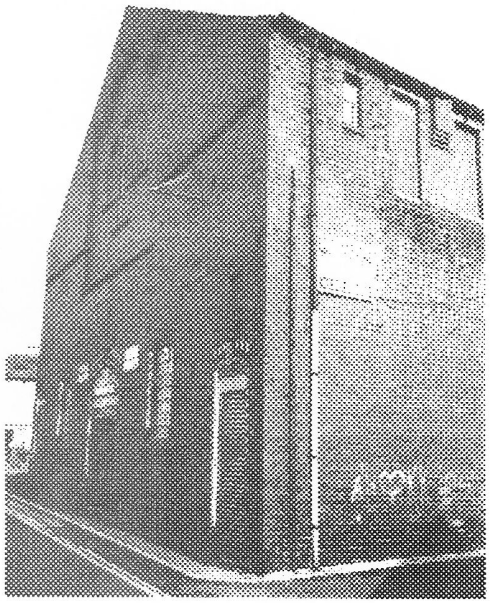


Plate 23 The Palace, Barnoldswick

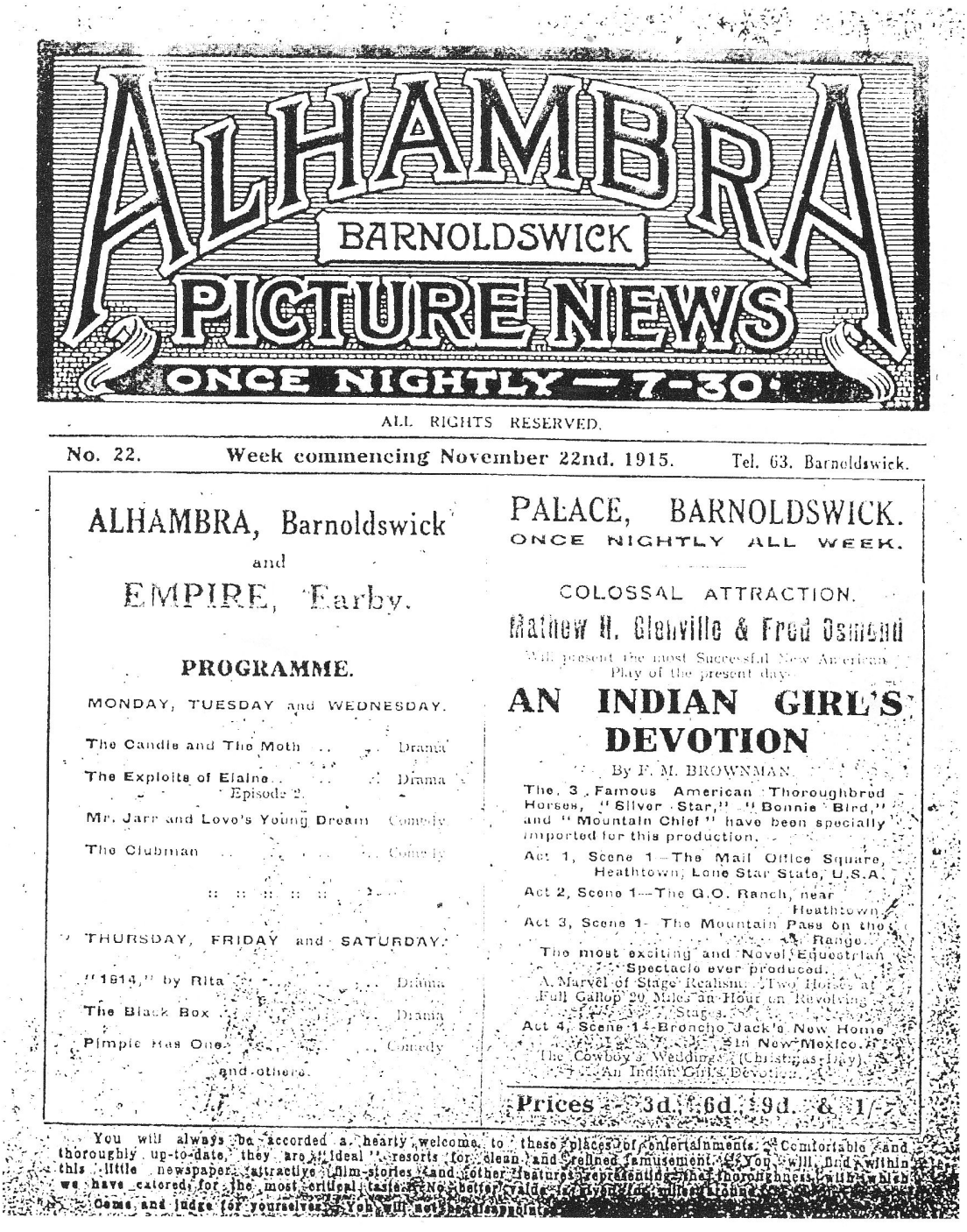
Above - the left-hand side elevation

Right - the façade

Matthew Hartley was involved in the construction of other buildings in the town. One of them was the **Public Hall** and Skating Rink in St.James' Square. This became the **Palace Theatre** or **People's Palace**. It is listed in the Kinematograph Year Book of 1915. It seated 800 and admission was from 4d, to 1/- in 1918. Jack Williams was the manager. Messrs Nutter & Brown were the proprietors in 1920.

In 1925 the proprietors were the People's Palace Co, with W. Watson Brown as resident manager. Plays were presented at the Palace in the early days. It was the venue for local amateur theatrical productions. When the talkies came in, the Palace installed the Western Electric system. It became part of the Matthew Hartley cinema chain.

The Kinematograph Year Book of 1915 lists two other venues for films in Barnoldswick, the **Queen's Hall** and the **Victoria Hall**. Whether they were ever used regularly for film shows, or just occasionally, I don't know.



ALHAMBRA
BARNOLDSWICK
PICTURE NEWS
ONCE NIGHTLY—7-30.

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No. 22. Week commencing November 22nd. 1915. Tel. 63. Barnoldswick.

ALHAMBRA, Barnoldswick
and
EMPIRE, Earby.

PROGRAMME.

MONDAY, TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY.

The Candle and The Moth ... Drama
The Exploits of Elaine ... Drama
Episode 2.
Mr. Jarr and Love's Young Dream ... Comedy
The Clubman ... Comedy

THURSDAY, FRIDAY and SATURDAY.

"1914," by Rita ... Drama
The Black Box ... Drama
Pimple Has One ... Comedy
and others.

PALACE, BARNOLDSWICK.
ONCE NIGHTLY ALL WEEK.

COLOSSAL ATTRACTION.

Mathew H. Glenville & Fred Osmond

Will present the most Successful New American Play of the present day.

AN INDIAN GIRL'S DEVOTION

By F. M. BROWNMAN.

The 3 Famous American Thoroughbred Horses, "Silver Star," "Bonnie Bird," and "Mountain Chief" have been specially imported for this production.

Act 1, Scene 1—The Mail Office Square, Heathtown, Lone Star State, U.S.A.
Act 2, Scene 1—The G.O. Ranch, near Heathtown.
Act 3, Scene 1—The Mountain Pass on the Range.
The most exciting and Novel Equestrian Spectacle ever produced.
A Marvel of Stage Realism. Two Horses at Full Gallop 20 Miles an Hour on Revolving Stage.
Act 4, Scene 1—Broncho Jack's New Home in New Mexico.
The Cowboy's Wedding. (Christmas Day).
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